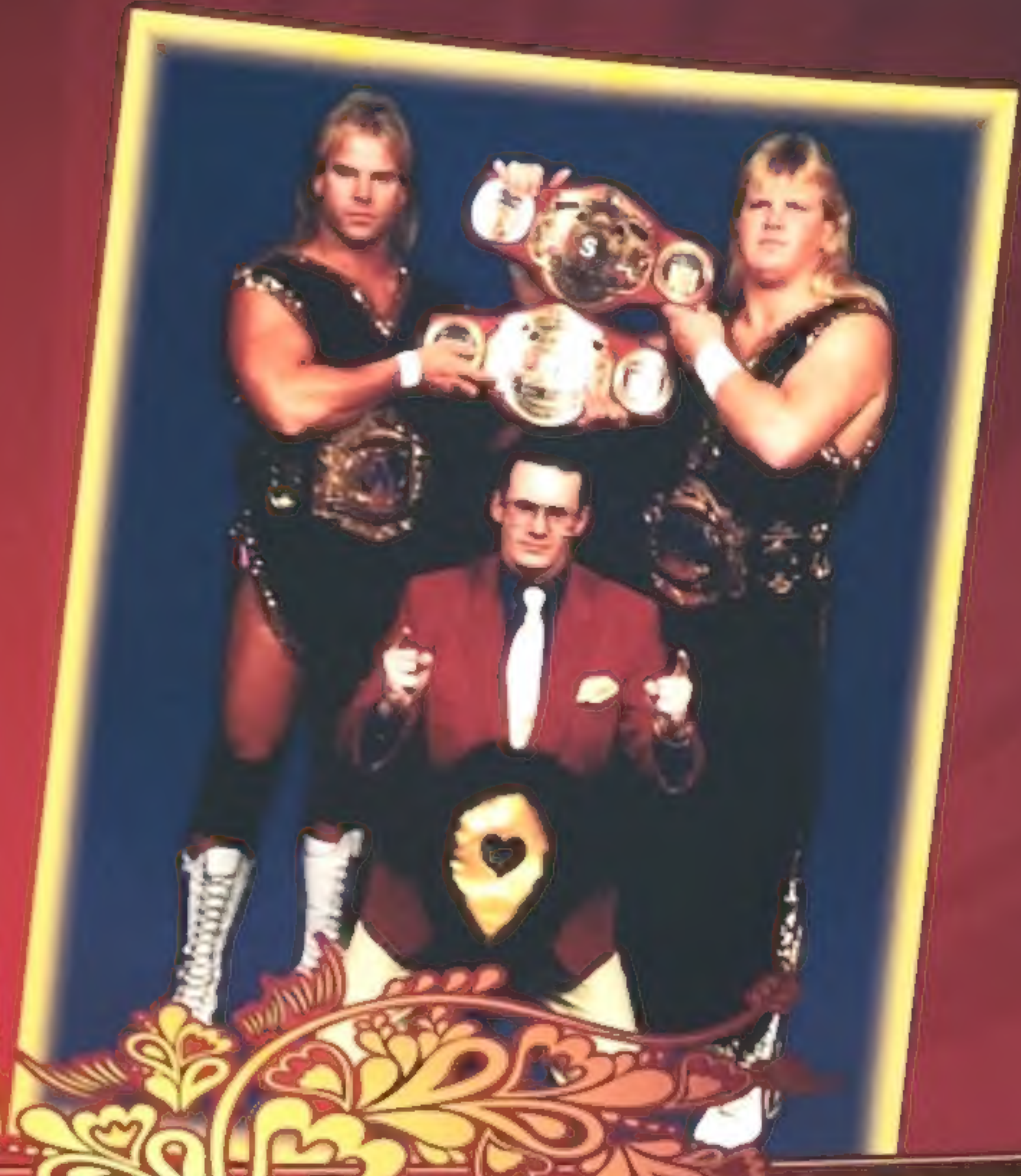
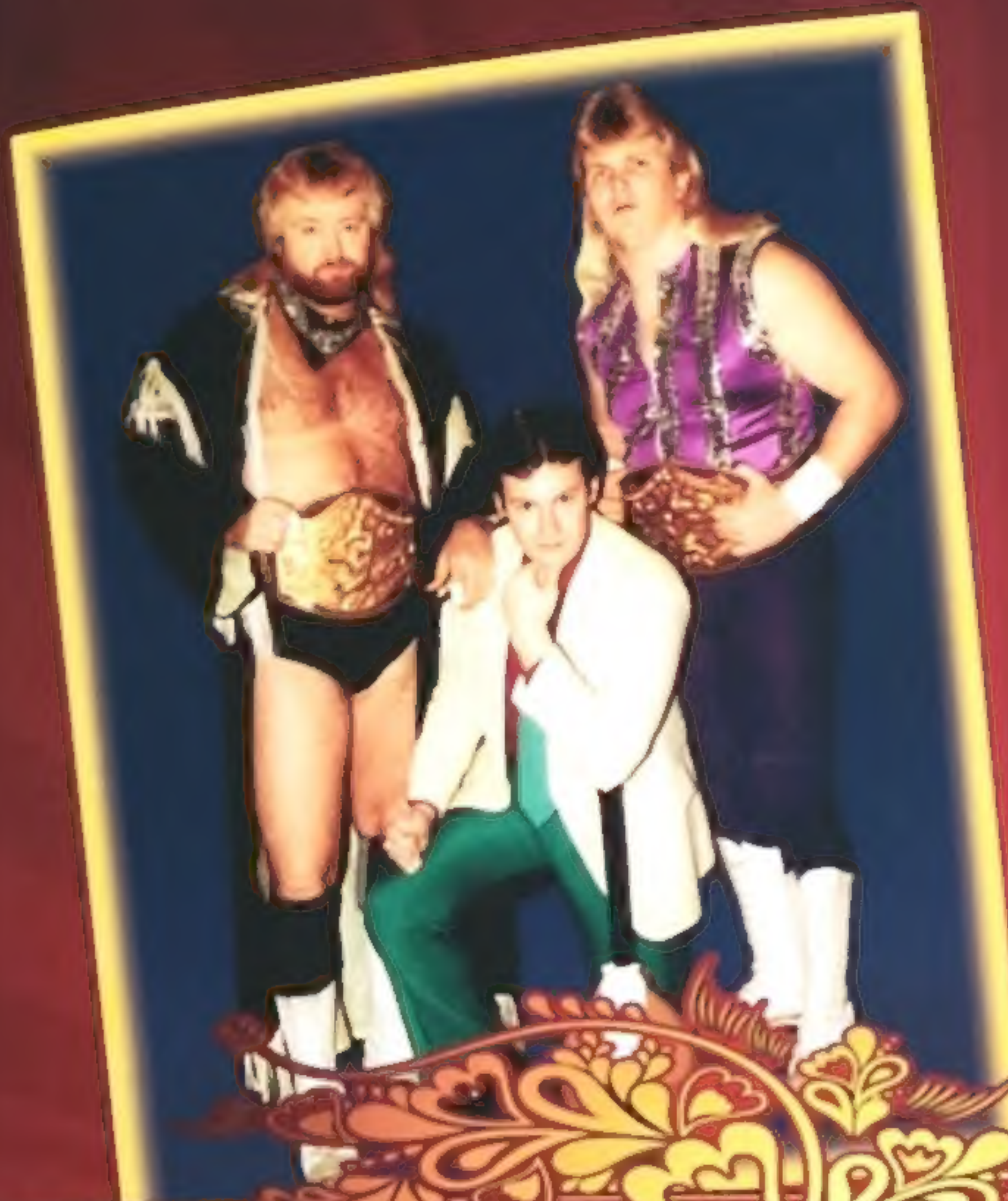




THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS
AND Jim Cornette
25th ANNIVERSARY SCRAPBOOK



by JIM CORNETTE with TIM ASH

THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

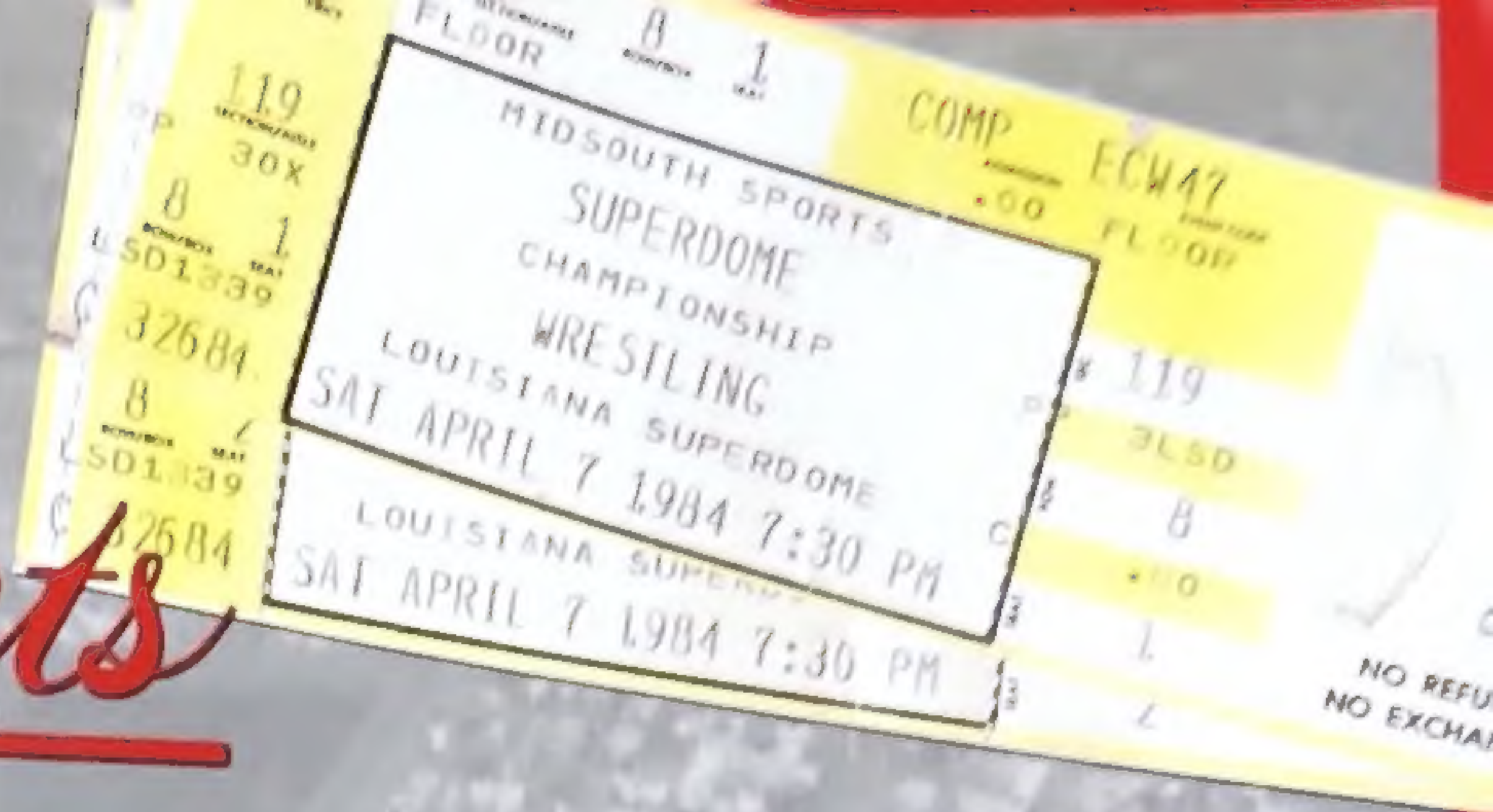


Bobby
Eaton

Jim
Cornette

Dennis
Condrey

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The Midnight Express & Jim Cornette 25th Anniversary Scrapbook-- "Cornette's Collectibles, LLC 2009. All reproductions from Jim Cornette's personal collection-- all rights remain with the respective copyright holders.

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*All the best,
Jim Cornette*

Introduction/Dedication

The original idea for this book was a vague thought of mine in 2006 to do a "little magazine" for the Midnight Express' 25th anniversary, with the results of all their matches, and some photos. From our start as a team, I had kept a daily appointment book with the dates, places and times of the shows, matches, finishes, gates and payoffs, and other travel or business notes. As I started to look at the material, I realized it might be a bigger project, and as I saw just how much of an impact the time period in the wrestling wars had on today, I knew there was an opportunity to provide an inside look at a pivotal moment in pro wrestling history, as well.

The Express and I had a remarkable run, all things considered, and this project was fun to put together, looking back on things even I hadn't seen in twenty years. I contacted my friend Tim Ash, who has worked with me on several wrestling projects, and is also a computer layout/design whiz where publishing is concerned, and gave him access to my seemingly endless archives of photos, results, documents, video tapes, facts and figures pertaining to the Express and all of wrestling from 1983-1990. I transcribed results of thousands of matches from my books, told stories, and wrote whole chapters. Tim researched documents, ratings, compiled things in an orderly fashion and most importantly for my anti-technology disorder, did the computer work. We both have had a hand in this, but everything either attributed to me in quotes or bearing my by-line is my words, so if anybody gets pissed off, get pissed off at me.

We have tried to produce the best pro wrestling souvenir book possible, a scrapbook focusing on one of the top tag teams of all time that also gives some insight into the pro wrestling industry of the 1980's. It's a scrapbook of our years together as well as an illus-

tration of a business changing rapidly. I was also very fortunate to have saved so many things to illustrate the story, as you will see photos, newspaper stories, booking sheets, pay check stubs, tickets, and documents that help give clarification to the times, some never seen by the public. Whatever else it's qualities, we hope that it is a cool book to have and read for anyone interested in pro wrestling.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the three people without which there would be no book - Dennis Condrey, Bobby Eaton and Stan Lane. Besides their many contributions to the success of the team as a whole, I thank them individually for, among other things:

---Dennis, for being a teacher and ring general in the Mid-South and early Crockett years, and also for being one of the funniest guys I know--

---Bobby, for being the foundation of either Express, whose performances and consistency over a 2,500 night run showed a dedication rare in our business, and also for being the nicest guy in wrestling--

---Stan, for running with the ball to keep the team on top and bringing the look we needed in the TV and PPV era, and also for being the all-time music trivia champion on long car trips, and instigator of the best ribs--

Only one thing would have made the Express' recent reunions any better, and that would have been the inclusion of Big Bubba Rogers. Ray Traylor, known as Big Bubba in the NWA and the Big Bossman in the WWF (now WWE), passed away not long before our first reunion in 2004. All of us, except Dennis, had seen each other here and there, one or two of us had even worked in the same promotions together, but we hadn't all been back in the same place in the same roles we first got together in. Now, with Bubba, we won't get the chance, but it has made the other reunions more meaningful.

Bubba came in right in the middle of our run for Jim Crockett Promotions, so we worked almost a year with Bobby and Dennis, and almost a year with Bobby and Stan. He was really like the fourth Express member to both teams. With all respect to the other great wrestlers and friends we have worked together with, like Hercules Hernandez, Dick Murdoch, and Steve "Dr. Death" Williams, Bubba was the only guy we considered a full, regular member of the Midnight Express.

From the start, he fit right in both in and out of the ring. A fun, happy and outgoing guy to travel with, respectful but not "markish" in the locker room, and hardworking and a fast learner in the ring, we all knew we were getting to help develop a future big singles talent, and he proved us right.

The classic story of Bubba's dedication to his gimmick of the no-selling, badass bodyguard – as we arrived at the Atlanta Omni in a taxi, there were several hundred fans, as usual, waiting near the wrestler's entrance. As Bubba stepped out of the backseat, the driver slammed the door on his fingertips, hard enough that it latched with his fingers still in the door!

Bubba just calmly said, "Hey buddy, the door's on my hand", and the driver snatched it open. Bubba picked up his bag and walked inside. I followed him in the door, and as I

looked at him to ask if he was ok, I saw he was sweating and about to cry as he grabbed his hand. He sold it then, but he said, "I couldn't sell it in front of all those fans!"

We will always think of Ray Traylor as Bubba, and I'd like to dedicate this book to his memory, just as he gave us many great memories of our own.

Jim Cornette
Louisville, Kentucky
March 2009





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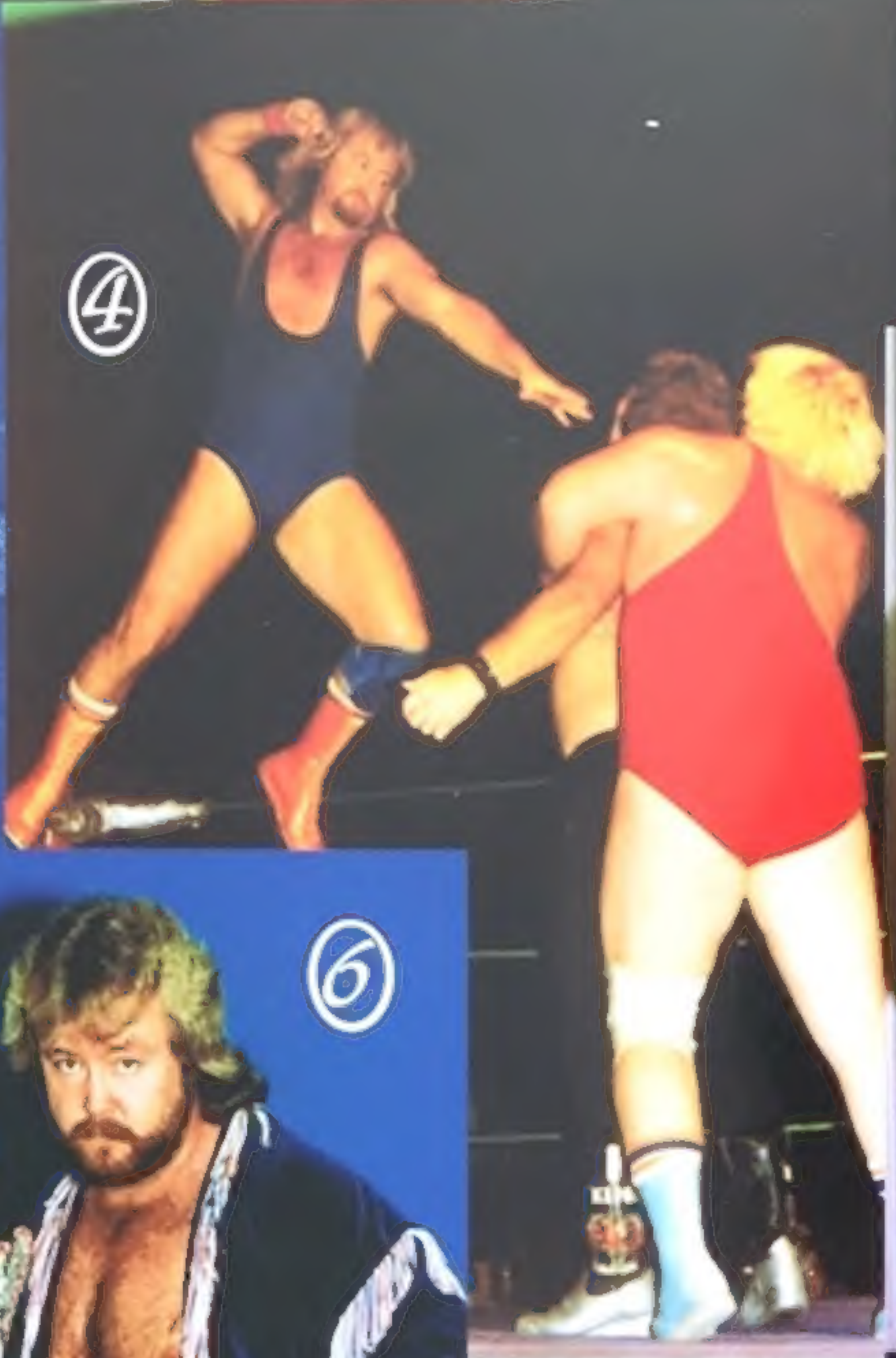


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- Dennis**
1. Posing For Jim Cornette 1975
 2. With Phil Hickerson
Southern Tag Champs 1977
 3. Southeastern Champs 1978
 4. Doubleteaming Jerry Lawler 1978
 5. With Don Carson 1979
 6. The Original Midnight Express 1982
 7. With Gordon Solle 1980



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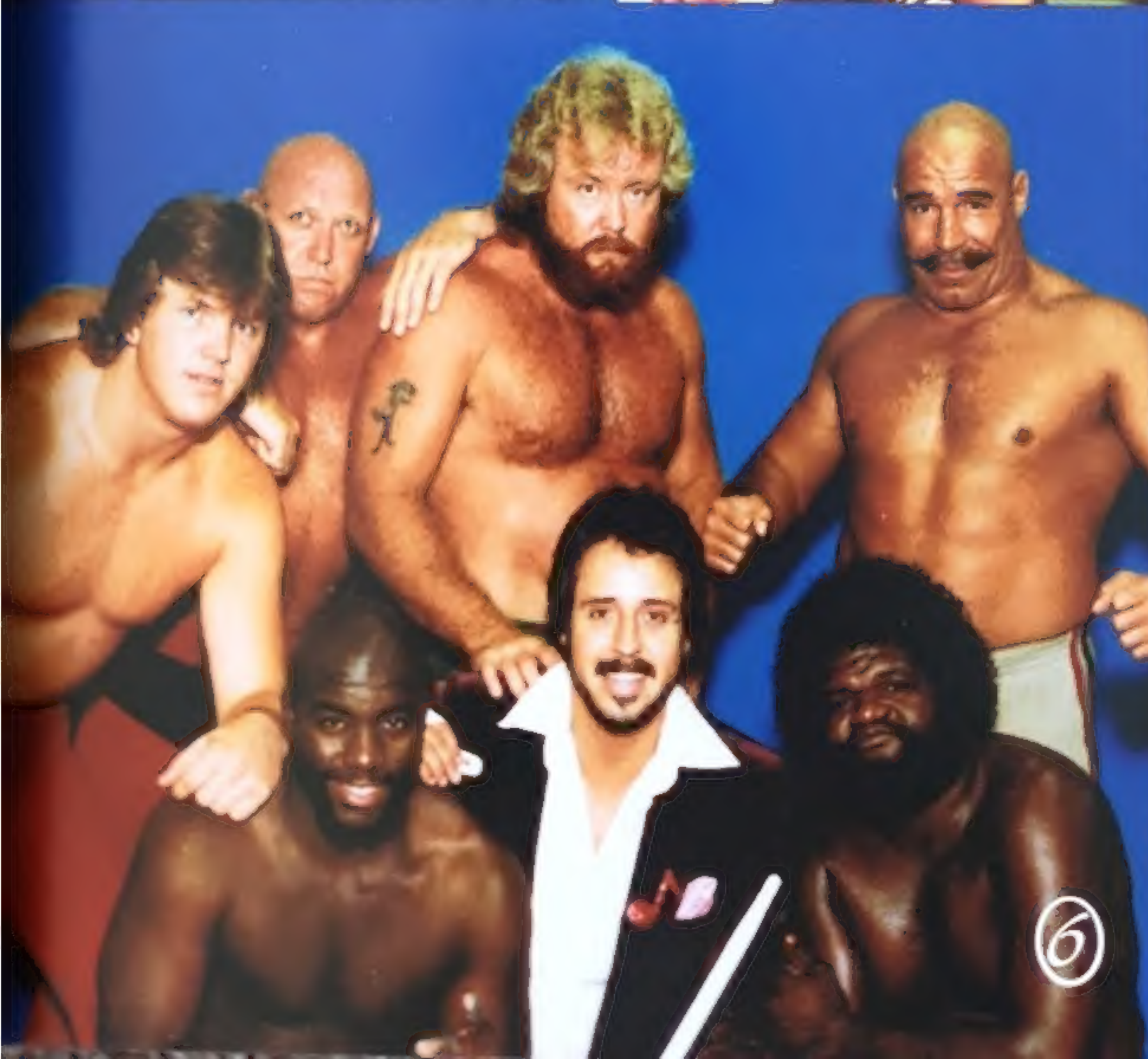


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Bobby

1. With Dennis in Gulas Cocker Room 1979
2. & 3. Mid-America Champ 1979 & 1980
4. TBS TV Atlanta 1980
5. With KoKo Ware Southern Champs 1982
6. Jimmy Hart's First Family- Bobby, The Angel, Dennis, Iron Sheik, KoKo, Norvel Austin 1982
7. With Troy Graham, Rick McGraw, KoKo & Hart 1982





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Stan

1. Nature Boy Stan Lane 1980
2. Stretching Steve Keirn 1981
3. Southern Tag Champ 1981
4. Babyface About Town 1982
5. The Fabulous Ones 1982
6. With Steve Keirn and The Fabulous Jackie Fargo 1983



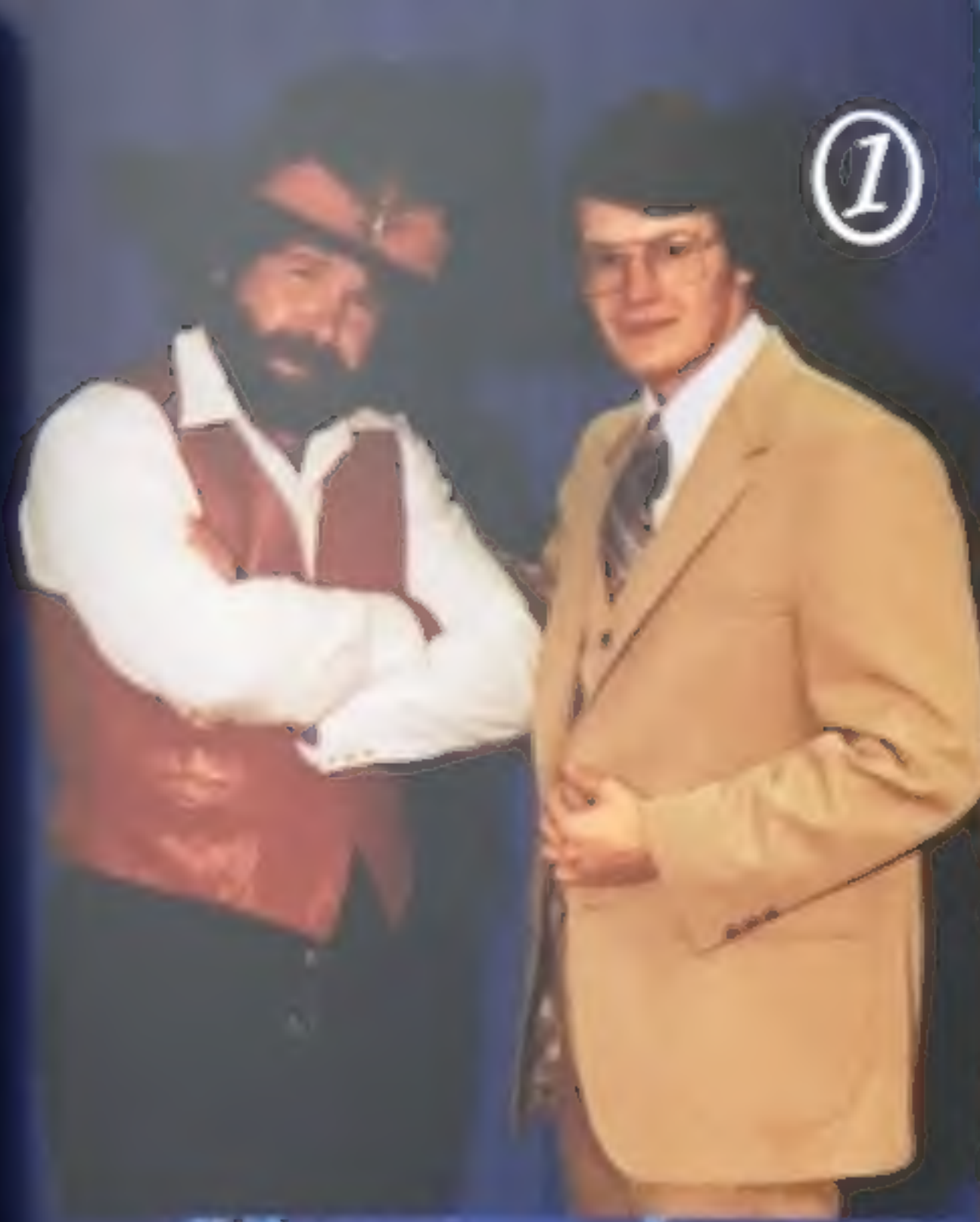
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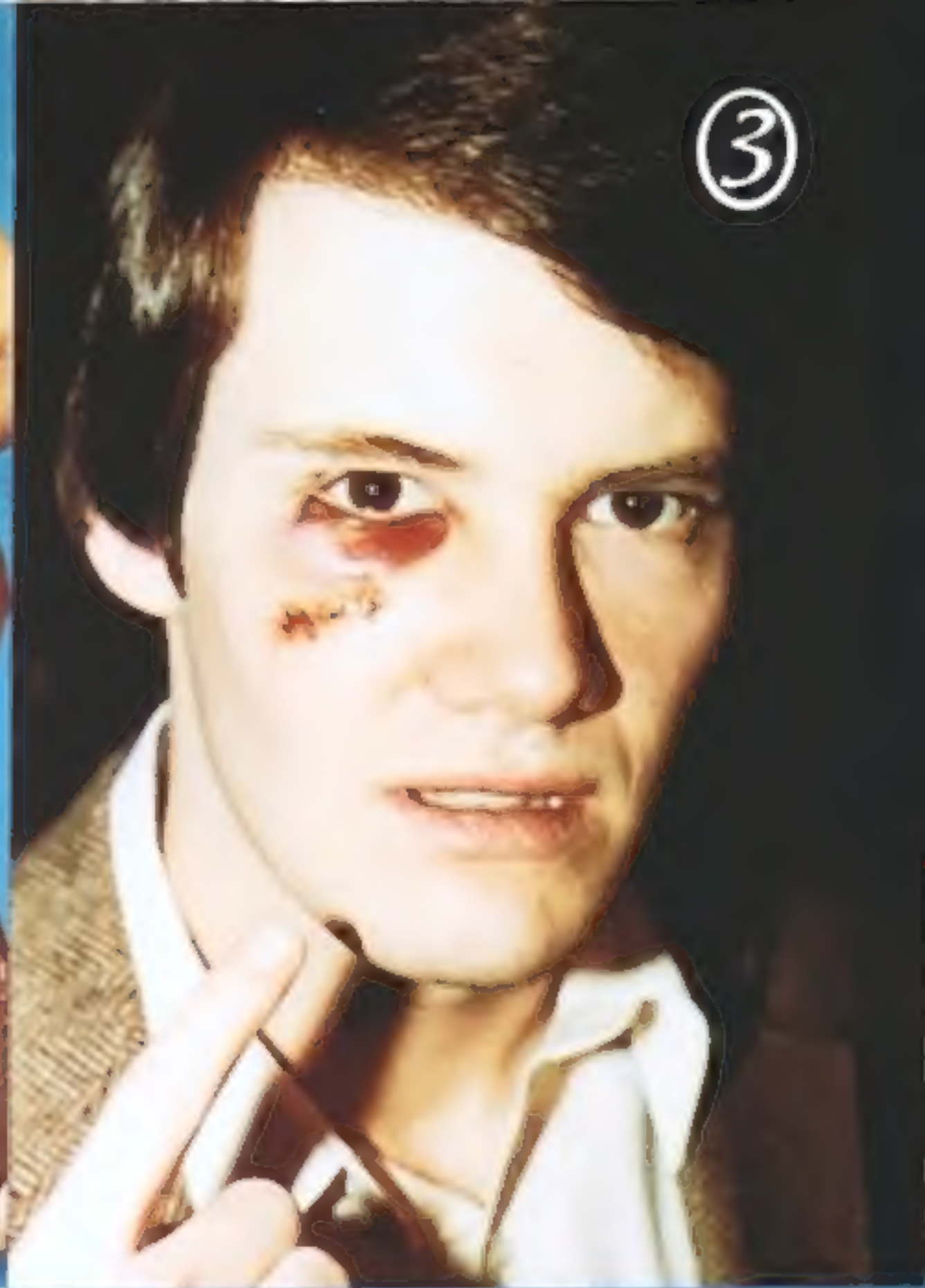
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Jim

1. With Dutch Mantell 1982

2. The Dynasty of Champions 1982

3. Catching Potatoes 1983

4. With The Galaxians 1983

5. Mama's Boy 1983

6. The Entire First Family Summer 1983

7. Southern Tag Champs Bobby Eaton

& Duke Myers with the two Jimmys 1983



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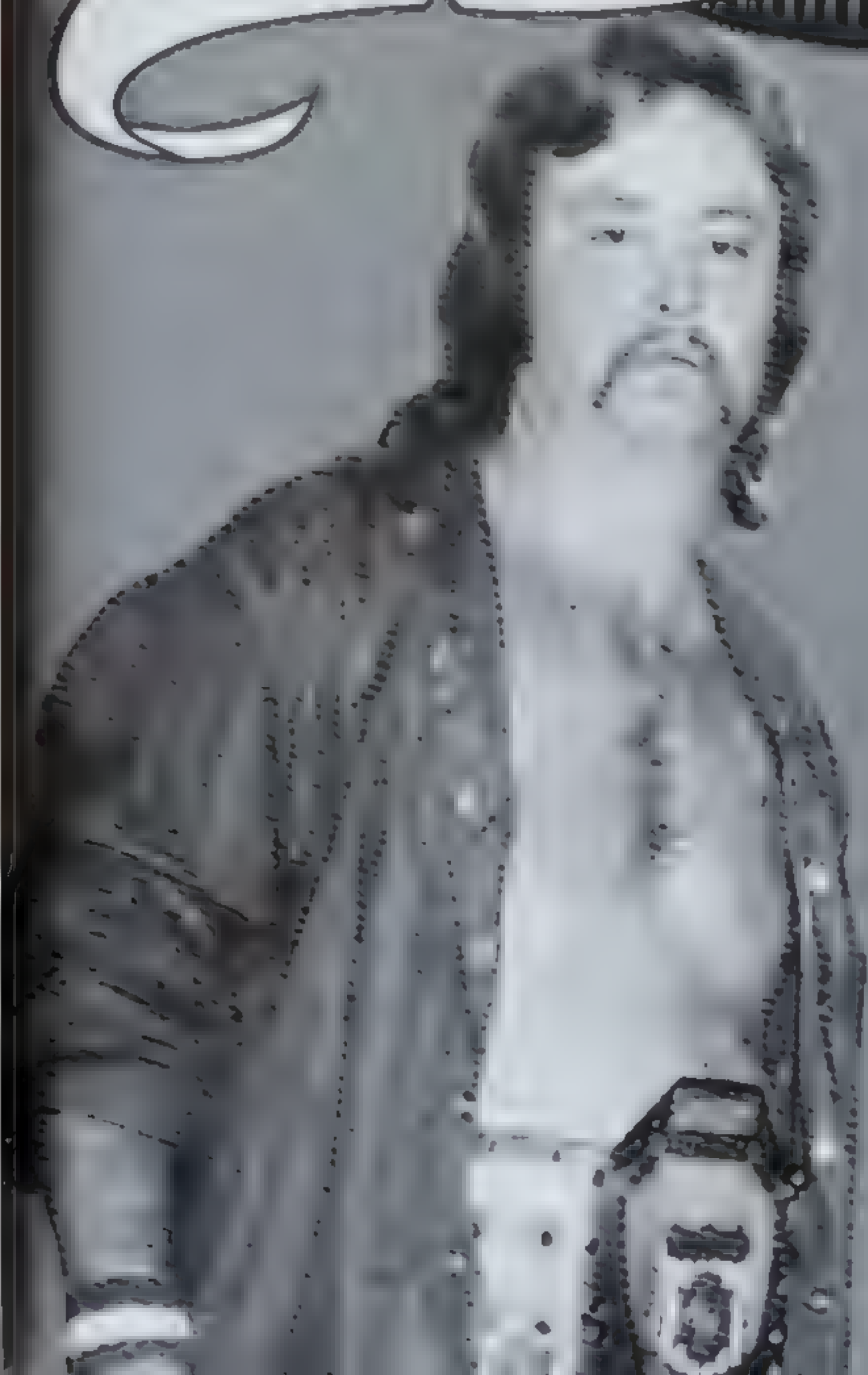
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The Midnight Express
December 1983



BEFORE MIDNIGHT



DENNIS CONDREY

Dennis Condrey was born on February 1st in Florence, Alabama. Interestingly, he is the only member of the Midnight Express who was not a wrestling fan as a child, but apparently pro wrestling was his destiny anyway. In high school, Dennis played on the football team, and in those days after the season was over, all the players wrestled the rest of the year to complete their course requirements. He became a pretty fair amateur wrestler, which came in handy when his sister married veteran pro wrestler Joe Turner right after Dennis graduated in 1969.

Turner, who wrestled as Joe Sky, was a journeyman performer who had formed a well-known team with Bill Bowman (Bill Sky), wrestling all over the south in the 1960's. By the early 70's, Turner was working in the Mid-Atlantic territory out of Charlotte run by promoter Jim Crockett, Sr. Former amateur champion Bob Roop had turned pro and was doing a "shoot challenge" on Mid-Atlantic TV, where he would take on all comers under amateur rules, with a cash prize to anyone who defeated him. Knowing Dennis could wrestle, Turner got him booked against Roop, and although Dennis was finally pinned, Roop couldn't submit him as he did most opponents, and that got the wrestling office interested.

"It was a shoot", Dennis laughs, "because I didn't know there was any other kind of match. Nobody smartened me up that wrestling was a work, and Joe had never told me because in those days you didn't always even smarten up family."

Crockett gave Dennis a spot as a referee so he could learn the business by watching. Apart from that, his only training was simply Turner teaching him to lock up, when he had his first match against Steve Lawler when Lawler's scheduled opponent failed to show. Again, he did well enough that Turner decided to take him on the road as a partner, and they spent much of 1972-73 working for famed promoter LeRoy McGuirk in Louisiana as the masked team Mephisto and Dante, managed by veteran Bobby Whitlock.

Returning to Charlotte in 1973, Dennis worked prelims, but as he recalls, really wasn't going any-



where. "Charlotte was loaded with talent," Dennis recalled, "and there weren't any spots available. Crockett liked me, but he suggested I should go somewhere else for more experience, and then they'd bring me back. He got me booked in Tennessee for Nick Gulas, and I started there in November 1974."

It was a successful move almost from the start. After about six months as an underneath babyface, Dennis would move to the top of the cards, but only after a few strange coincidences. In January, 1975, at the Louisville Gardens, Dennis posed for a photo for a 13 year old fan, the first posed photo by a kid who would go on to snap thousands--Jim Cornette. Then, in the spring, spending a short time in the Alabama end of the territory, Dennis would barely notice the 16 year-old kid helping set up the ring in Huntsville, a diehard fan named Bobby Eaton. "If anybody had told me", Dennis says, "that nine years later, the ring boy, the fan with the camera and I would main event the Superdome together, you can imagine what I would have said!"

In Summer 1975, Memphis booker Jerry Jarrett needed a heel to team with Phil Hickerson, replacing Big Al Greene, who was winding down his wrestling career. The team of Don & Al Greene, the

original "Heavenly Bodies", had been stars in Tennessee for 15 years, and huge gate attractions Hickerson had gotten Don's spot in 1974, and that team had been featured on top ever since. Now, Jarrett picked Dennis to replace Al, and the team of Phil Hickerson and Dennis Condrey began a long run as the top heel team in the Southeast

Rotating between the Memphis territory, Ron Fuller's Southeastern promotion in Knoxville, and later, after the Gulas-Jarrett split, the Nashville circuit operated by Gulas, they were always on top or champions. Hickerson, a huge, brawny brawler with a big gut who took big bumps and moved like a cat, complimented Dennis' quick, solid and precise style, good technical moves on offense and big bumps and great body language on defense. Both were entertaining promos to the few heel fans of the day, but as a unit whether talking or wrestling they got big heat. In fact, Jim Cornette remembers Hickerson and Condrey as, all-around, the best heel team he ever saw in person before the Midnight Express

Between 1975 and 1979, Dennis and Phil held Memphis' Southern Tag Team Championship at least 5 times, as well as the Southeastern Tag Title in Knoxville twice and the Mid-America Tag belts in Nashville twice. They switched between managers like Al Costello, Rock Hunter and Ron Wright, but spent an equal amount of time on their own with just as much success. In early 1979, Hickerson suffered a serious knee injury, underwent surgery, and got out of

the business for several years. Dennis teamed with veteran Don Carson to win the Southern Tag Title in February, then headed to Nashville for a singles run which was his first successful stint as a heavyweight champion.

Holding Gulas' Mid-America Heavyweight Title, one of Dennis' most persistent challengers was top young babyface Bobby Eaton. Champion from June 2nd to October 20, 1979, Dennis was also granted a few shots at Harley Race's NWA World Heavyweight Championship in the main cities like Nashville and Chattanooga. In late 1979, Condrey headed back to Knoxville and began a partnership with "Dr. D.", David Schultz, winning the Southeastern Tag belts again. By Spring 1980, the two had headed over to Memphis and become Southern Tag champs, having tremendous matches with the Gibson Brothers, Ricky and Robert.

Now in demand all over the south, Dennis went to Georgia Championship Wrestling in Summer 1980, where he appeared on Superstaion TBS for the first time, initially partnered with a young heel just out of Florida named Stan Lane. Condrey defeated Steve Keirn for the Georgia Heavyweight Title, then after losing that belt to Tony Atlas in late October, moved over to the Pensacola/Alabama end of the Southeastern area and began teaming for the first time with Randy Rose.

Spending all of 1981 on top in Alabama, Rose and Condrey were three time Southeastern Tag Team



Champions, and Dennis also wore the Mid-South Heavyweight Title on two different occasions. In January 1982, Condrey returned to Memphis, bringing Rose with him and adding Memphis veteran Norvell Austin to form a Freebirds-like three man team, which he called the Midnight Express.

The original Express had a successful 6 month run in Memphis, reigning as Southern Tag Champions twice, then returned to Alabama where, from Summer 1982 until Summer 1983, they dominated the tag team picture, holding the Southeastern belts on 5 different occasions.

In July 1983, Dennis and Norvell returned to Memphis as a two-man team, and competed there until Bill Watts' visit in November. In another of those strange coincidences, the night Watts came to see the talent, Condrey and Austin defeated Stan Lane and Steve Keirn, the Fabulous Ones, for the Memphis version of the World Tag Team Title with help from the interference of rookie manager Jim Cornette.

Interestingly, despite all the coincidences in the careers of Condrey, Eaton, Lane and Cornette, and even

though Dennis and Bobby Eaton spent the better part of 1975 to 1983 working in the various southern territories, there is no record or recollection of Condrey and Eaton joining together even once before debuting as a team on Mid-South TV in November 1983.

Despite all these successes, Dennis cites as his career highlight before the Midnight Express years his match in Birmingham, Alabama in the mid-70's with the wrestling bear.

"Tank Morgan bragged for a month he was gonna beat the bear, he was gonna pin the bear", Dennis recalls. "Time came for the match, and Morgan left the territory. So they put me in with the bear. I didn't win, but at least afterward, all the guys said, 'Don't fuck with that guy, he fought the bear, he ain't scared of us!'"

Dennis, as the most experienced veteran on the team with Eaton and Cornette, would use that seasoning well in becoming the newest Express' ring general.



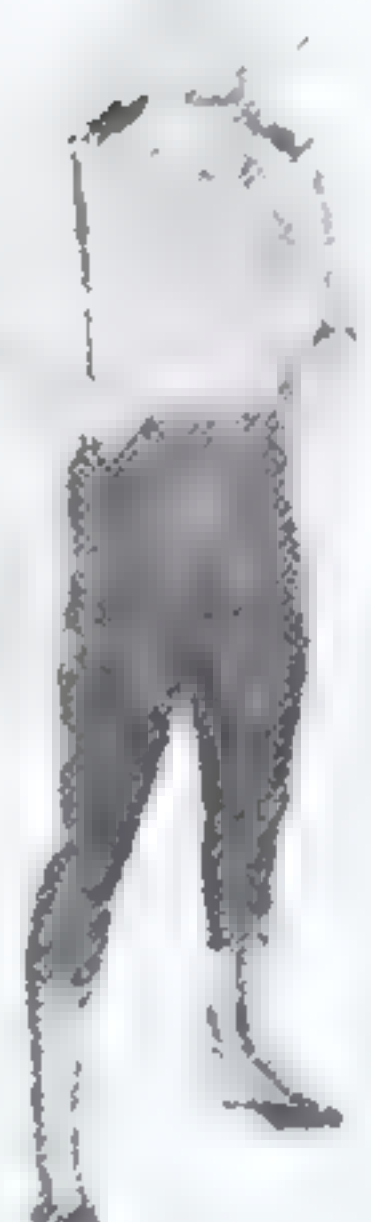

Mckenzie Wrestling Enterprises, Inc.
Presents
**MONDAY NIGHT
WRESTLING**
BOUTWELL AUDITORIUM 8 P.M.
SPECIAL ORDERED NWA
Mid America Heavyweight
Championship Match
DENNIS CONDREY
CHAMPION
VS.
BOBBY EATON
CHALLENGER

TAG MATCH
THE MEDICS 1 & 2
VS.
**GYPSY JOE
& TOM RENESTO, SR.**

THE GREAT TOGO VS. **RICKY and**
TOJO YAMAMOTO VS. **ROBERT GIBSON**

DAVID SHULTZ VS. PRINCE TONGA

OPENING CARD AT 8 P.M.
AMON HESSEIN VS. BUTCH THORNTON




BOBBY EATON

Bobby Eaton was born August 14, 1958 in Huntsville, Alabama, and was a fan of pro wrestling at an early age. "I always kind of liked the heels", he says, "even though I was scared of Kurt and Karl Von Brauner. But I liked all the top guys, especially Jackie Fargo and Len Rossi."

By the age of 12, Bobby discovered that if he went to the local matches in Huntsville and helped set up the ring, he could get in free. From that point on, he was a regular. It's almost inconceivable in this day and age, but the man who would go on to become universally acclaimed by wrestlers and fans alike as one of the greatest in-ring performers of his generation had no formal training whatsoever.

"I watched every match as close as I could", Bobby remembers, "and my buddy from Huntsville, Arvil Hutto, and I would get in the ring after we set it up and more or less practice what we saw. Some of the guys saw us, I guess, and one night in Birmingham Bearcat Brown's opponent didn't show up. They told me to fill in for him, but nobody really told me anything. I knew enough not to try to beat him, I couldn't have anyway, and I guess I did okay."

Off this one match in 1975, with no training and still months before his 17th birthday, Bobby began being booked regularly for matches around Northern Alabama, as well as losing matches on TV paired with his friend Arvil under masks as The Brown Bombers. The towns were small and payoffs slim.

"One night," Bobby laughs, "I worked as Bobby Eaton one match, then came back as the Wolfman under a mask because the "real" Wolfman didn't show up. In those days, there might only be 6 different guys on a show with 4 matches and a Battle Royal."

Still a teenager but with the wrestlers and office seeing his potential, Bobby learned invaluable lessons from veteran Tojo Yamamoto. Tojo, a main event star and legend in Tennessee since the early 60's, was noted for mentoring young wrestlers with talent. An unlikely-looking wrestling star, Tojo resembled Buddha more than anything else at 5'4" and 230 pounds, but as both a

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heel and later a babyface he remained until his death one of the all time great gate attractions in the area. Tojo's training methods were unorthodox, to say the least.

In those days, there were few if any wrestling schools, and few in-ring workouts. Tojo's method was to beat the crap out of a young wrestler in a match, and if he came back for more, he had passed the first test. His primary teaching methods were on long car trips where he would preach facial expression, body language, selling and psychology.

In the excellent book "Memphis Wrestling History Vol. 2" by Mark James, Jerry Jarrett, one of Tojo's most successful proteges, recounts this example. "He explained that facial expression was the difference between a main event wrestler and a "curtain jerker" Tojo would grab my finger or ear and pinch hard until I was almost in tears. He would then turn me loose and turn the mirror toward me and say "Now look your face". He would repeat this exercise until I showed the same painful expression without any pain as I did with the pain."

Bobby's climb up the cards and lessons from Tojo and others weren't easy and he remembers at one point making payments on a car that didn't run and riding a bus to shows. By May, 1977, after Jarrett's split with Gulas divided the territory in half, the Brown Bombers started making bigger towns, including Nashville and Chattanooga, and winning as much as they lost, including working a program with Tojo and Nick's son George Gulas for the Tri-State

Tag Title. Just before his 19th birthday, Nick took the mask off Bobby, and he began working under his own name.

By January 1978 Eaton and Lanny Poffo had won the Mid-America Tag Championship. In the spring of 1978, Gulas chose Bobby to be the partner of his son George. Nick Gulas had been one of the most successful promoters in the sport for almost 40 years, partnering with wrestling pioneer Roy Welch to run a huge geographical territory based out of Nashville that often saw up to three full circuits running simultaneously. When his son George decided to turn pro in 1974, it was the beginning of the end.

George was a notoriously poor wrestler that Nick pushed to the heavens, and Nick's insistence that George be pushed in the "Memphis end" of the territory when Memphis was the biggest-drawing city per capita in the entire sport led to Memphis booker Jarrett starting his own company and taking most of the top talent with him. Nick still insisted in booking George in main events, and picked Bobby as the partner who could do the work and carry the team. Bobby liked George as a person, recognized his limitations, and did the best he could in the team known as "the Jet Set".

In December 1978, the Jet Set defeated Tojo and Gypsy Joe for the Mid-America Tag Title, then lost to future Freebirds Terry Gordy and Michael Hayes in January 1979. In February, Eaton and the Mexican Angel won and lost the belts to Gordy and Hayes, and then as a single Bobby won the Mid-America Title for the first time on March 2, 1979, defeating Randy "Macho Man" Savage. The two, years before being recognized as two of the best in the business on national TV, would do a lengthy program, with time limit draws of 30:00, then one hour, then return matches with 90:00 time limits teasing going the distance before a finish.

Bobby also had several big main events in the area, teaming with Andre the Giant against Gordy and Hayes, and with George Gulas against Dennis Condrey and Chris Colt, all before his 21st birthday. Eaton vs. Condrey topped the summer 1979 cards in battles for the Mid-America Title. After another run as Mid-America champion in the fall, beating Dutch Mantell and losing to Chris Colt, Bobby and George were tag champs again from September until November, when the belts were vacated after he turned heel on George and joined Tojo's stable.

It didn't last long, as he and George were part-



ners again by February 1980, winning and losing the Tag Title again in a lengthy program with the Blonde Bombers, Wayne Farris (Honky Tonk Man) and Larry Latham (Moondog Spot) with manager Danny Davis. After two more stints as Mid-America Heavyweight Champion, Bobby got his first national TV exposure in Summer 1980 while working for Georgia Championship Wrestling and appearing on TBS.

With Gulas' territory foundering, Bobby, again Mid-America champion, began wrestling for Jarrett's Memphis area in late 1980, managed by Jimmy Hart and having great matches with the likes of Austin Idol, Billy Robinson and Bill Dundee. Eaton's talent was finally being noticed on a big stage with larger crowds, and after a stint in the short-lived Ric Flair & Blackjack Mulligan-owned Knoxville circuit, he returned to Memphis in December 1981, this time to stay.

Bobby quickly rejoined Jimmy Hart's First Family, replacing, of all people, the recently-switched-babyface Stan Lane in a team with Koko Ware. The Eaton-Ware team, "Ebony and Ivory", were dynamite, a big-bumping team with spectacular high spots, and they held the Southern Tag Title twice in 1982, having barn-burner main events with the Gibson Brothers, the Fabulous Ones, Jerry Lawler and Bill Dundee and others.

As a single, Eaton also held the Mid-America Title twice more in 1982 and three times in 1983, finishing as a 9 time champion. In May 1983, Jimmy Hart and Jim Cornette pooled their resources, with Hart's man Eaton joining JC's man Duke Myers as a "superteam", defeating the Fabs for the Southern Tag Title and holding them for a few weeks.

Shortly afterward, Bobby switched babyface and spent all summer in a program with Hart's Moondogs, teaming with various partners including, at least once, with Stan Lane. After that ran its course, Bobby was stuck in prelims for the last few months of 1983, until Watts' visit changed his career forever.

Bobby has a similar story to Dennis Condrey as relates to the wrestling bear, although he didn't consider it a highlight. "I wrestled the bear the same way most people did", he laughs. "The guy who was supposed to didn't show up, and they put me in instead. He was stiff as hell and really bashing me in the ribs with his muzzle. I drew back and punched the bastard as hard as I could right between the eyes. He didn't sell it, just looked at me, but from then on he loosened up a little!"

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Possibly the best "unknown" talent in the business, Bobby was the perfect partner for a veteran like Dennis Condrey.



STAN LANE

Stan Lane was born August 5th, 1953 in Greensboro, North Carolina, and by the age of 10 he was watching Mid-Atlantic Wrestling on TV with his grandfather. "My grandpa's favorites were George Becker and Johnny Weaver" Stan says, "but I liked all the "surfer types" like George "Catalina" Drake."

During his high school years, then college at East Carolina and Guilford College, Stan got away from watching wrestling, but fate returned him to it after taking a job at the Greensboro Health Club in 1974. Also working there were fellow fans and future wrestlers Terry Taylor and Steve Musulin (Steve Travis), and they began going to matches together at the Greensboro Coliseum. With very little training besides fooling around at the Health Club, the three wound up booked on a rare "outlaw" show in Winston-Salem, the heart of Crockett country.

"I was injured in training", Stan recalls, "so I managed Terry and Steve, using the name Mike Malibu. Sitting ringside, the sound and impact of the bumps and slams was incredible, this was pretty serious stuff!" Basically thinking this was a fun thing he had done once, Stan had no more participation in wrestling besides as a fan until another chance meeting in 1978, when he moved to Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Establishing his lifelong rep as the "Gangster of Love", the life of the party, Stan describes his days at the beach: "I worked fulltime as the head bouncer at the hottest club on the beach, Mother Fletcher's, then I'd hang out at an all night bar from 3-6 AM. I'd work room service part time at the Myrtle Beach Hilton in the morning, sleep from 10AM to 4PM, then get up and do it all over again."

One morning at the Hilton he picked up a room service order for four bloody marys with the name "Flair". "I didn't really believe it" he says, "until the door opened and there was Ric Flair in his underwear!"

All Flair had was a \$50 bill, so Stan tracked him down at the beach a short time later with his change, and invited Ric and Greg Valentine to a party at his club later that night. Flair noticed Stan's size and build and asked if he had any interest in



wrestling. After the beach season ended, Stan took him up on his offer of help.

"I would drive down to Charlotte a few times a week, run sprints down the street, use Flair's home gym, and train in the back yard with Ric, Geoff Portz and others," he remembers. "We'd do Hindu squats by the thousands. They tried to break us, and after 3 or 4 weeks they did, but Steve Musulin talked me out of quitting." After 8 weeks or so, and some road trips with Flair, Stan had his first 3 pro matches.

Debuting on December 29, 1978 in Shelby, N.C. with a 20:00 draw with Joe Furr, Stan followed up with a loss to Greg Valentine in Hampton, Va., and another draw with David Sierra in Bassett, Va. Travelling with Flair, Lane also met Blackjack Mulligan, who along with Dick Murdoch had just purchased the Amarillo territory from the Funks. Stan was offered a spot as an underneath heel, and in January 1979 packed his car and headed to Amarillo.

"I got there with \$500 and left broke", he laughs. "I worked as Nature Boy Stanley Lane in a robe I borrowed from Terry Garvin. One night, we did an angle where Skandor Akbar burned me with a fireball. I had a giant blister, and it was painful. Three

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days later, they wanted to do it again. Some of the veterans told me they were messing with me, so I respectfully told Murdoch and Mulligan no. Then they respectfully pulled me into a locked room and started berating me--I thought they were going to kill me. A few days later, Murdoch stretched me on TV, and Tank Patton suggested I go to Louisiana with him to work for Bill Watts."

Stan slept on Patton's couch for weeks until he met an attractive "benefactor", and made the long, brutal road trips in Mid-South Wrestling. "Watts was a tyrant, but he was fair. I worked every night and learned a lot in 3 or 4 months."

Meeting Dusty Rhodes at a show, Stan was offered a spot in Florida, and was made partners with Bryan St. John. On October 30, 1979, they won the Florida Tag Team Championship, defeating Eddie Graham and Ray Stevens. "It was unheard of for a rookie to beat two legends of that stature in the business" Stan says. As well, Florida was tailor-made for him--beaches, sun, girls and wrestling. Stan and St. John won the Tag Title twice more, from Mike Graham and Steve Keirn, and Jack Brisco and Jimmy Garvin, until an incident in the summer of 1980.

"Several of the boys were at the bar where Hulk Hogan used to play in the band", he says, "and Harley Race got into a fight. I joined in, and all the

boys were proud of me for helping stand up for the World Champ--until the arrest warrants came in."

Stan reluctantly left the state, and went home to Greensboro until he could get booked into Georgia, spending a brief time as partners with Dennis Condrey before becoming a single. Winning the Georgia Jr Heavyweight Title from Kevin Sullivan in September, he held it for several months, until new Georgia booker Robert Fuller suggested he go to brother Ron's Pensacola-based Southeastern territory in February 1981, with the belt renamed the United States Jr. Heavyweight Title.

While he was there, he became friends with Japanese star Masa Saito, who got him booked in Japan for Antonio Inoki. On that tour, he lost and regained the title from Japanese legend Tatsumi Fujinami. Then, he was booked into Memphis for a title match with Bill Dundee.

"Jerry Jarrett saw me," he says, "and told me to call him when I finished in Pensacola, so I did."

It was the beginning of an incredible run in the Memphis area for Stan. Debuting as a member of Jimmy Hart's First Family, he teamed with KokoWare, holding the Southern Tag Team Title for three months, but after awhile his good looks made him a natural babyface, and he left Hart, being replaced in the team by Bobby Eaton. For the first 6 months of 1982, Stan

teamed often with Steve Keirn, and apparently the team made an impression on Jerry Jarrett. Jarrett was looking to recreate the box office magic generated by the original Fabulous Fargos, Jackie, Don and Roughhouse, from the late 50's to the early 70's

The Fargos were unbeatable heels, strutting, brawling, and dressed in top hats, tuxedos and sequins before it was routine, who had sold out several Madison Square Garden events in the late 50's and then moved to Tennessee and become so notorious that they gradually became babyface heroes. Jackie, in particular, had become "the man" in the area, and after passing the top star torch to Jerry Lawler in the mid-70's, had remained the all-time wrestling legend

Both Fargo and Lawler had sold out the Memphis Mid-South Coliseum more times than even Elvis Presley. Jarrett's plan was to have Fargo find and mentor two young wrestlers as the next generation of the Fargos, and he picked Lane and Keirn. The original idea would have Fargo establish the team, then they would turn heel on him, feud with the top babyfaces like Lawler and Dundee, and be managed by a brand-new manager brought into the business for that specific purpose, Jim Cornette

There was only one thing wrong--Jarrett's innovations in updating the concept for the 80's, including the first MTV-style rock music videos in wrestling, with the "Fabs" being seen with hot girls and cool cars, the grand arena entrances with limosines and motorcycles with music by ZZ Top and Billy Squier blaring, and Fargo's legendary status with the fans combined with Stan and Steve's blond hair, good looks and stiff, all-out brawling matches created the hottest babyface tag team attraction the area had ever seen. The Fabulous Ones were over instantly, kept getting more over, and Jarrett would have been a fool to switch them heel. Of all things, Jerry Jarrett was no fool.

The Fabs not only revolutionized Memphis wrestling, but their contemporary, MTV-style presentation spawned succesful spinoffs like the Rock & Roll Express, the Fantastics, and the Midnight Rockers, in much the same way that the success of the Road Warriors begat many face-painted, spike-wearing bodybuilder teams. The Fabs spinoffs, however, generally had more success, as much due to those teams consisting of superior workers as well as because Lane and Keirn's initial run was not seen on national TV.

Defeating Bobby Eaton and Koko Ware for the



Southern Tag Title in November, 1982, the Fabs ruled the area and held the belts a total of 8 times through early 1984, waging war with teams like the Shepherders, the Moondogs, the Assassins and the Road Warriors. In addition to drawing large crowds, the Fabs made thousands per week in photo sales at the events, selling pictures taken by Jim Cornette. "We were treated like rock stars." Stan recalls.

In early 1984, the Fabs left Memphis for Verne Gagne's AWA. "The gimmick was over so huge," Stan says, "we saw the AWA ran big cities, had national TV, everything we could ask for. We were doing mainstream talk shows, media appearances, it should have been great." But it wasn't. Verne Gagne was no Jerry Jarrett, and his lack of understanding of the Fabs' gimmick saw them presented as heelish and egotistical, obnoxious pretty boys with no legend like Fargo to help the fans understand where they were coming

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from. Additionally, Gagne programmed the Fabs against the Road Warriors, who he presented as heels despite the fact that they were well on their way to being the most popular team in the sport.

By October, 1984, the Fabs had given up on the AWA, the Warriors would do so the next year, and that, combined with the December 1983 loss of Hulk Hogan to the WWF, left the AWA hanging on for a few years until the once-big money territory faded into oblivion by 1990. The Fabs went back to Memphis, but it wasn't the same.

"Jarrett had made New Fabs out of Tommy Rich and Eddie Gilbert", Stan says, "it flopped, and hurt the whole gimmick." Even though the Fabs held the Southern Tag Title 7 more times between November 1984 and November 1985, Memphis business was down in general as the WWF expansion

began to impact the smaller territories, and the quality of the Fabs' opponents was suspect as well

By early 1986, they moved on to Florida. The Sunshine State was struggling as well after the death of Eddie Graham the year before, and although the Fabs reigned as U.S. Tag Champions from July to October, Keirn had made the decision by year's end to go into real estate, leaving Stan as a single and "wandering aimlessly."

In March 1987, J.J. Dillon came to Stan at TV in Tampa, and asked him to call Dusty Rhodes in Charlotte. "I joined the Midnight Express", Stan laughs, "and got my tires slashed a week later."

Departing from Express tradition, Stan never wrestled the bear, but has gone to the mat with thousands of foxes.



JIM CORNETTE

Jim Cornette was born September 17, 1961 in Louisville, Kentucky, and became a wrestling fanatic at an early age. "My mother, Thelma, was up sick one Saturday night", he recalls, "and stumbled on Dick the Bruiser's Indianapolis TV on a snowy station while flipping channels. She told me the next day she'd seen wrestling that looked like what she watched when she first moved to Louisville in 1952. This was 1971, but Bruiser's TV DID look like that then. I asked her if I could stay up the next week and watch it, and she said yes. Dick the Bruiser, the Crusher, Bobby Heenan, the Blackjacks, I was hooked.

I found local wrestling in Louisville, Nick Gulas' TV from Tennessee. Jackie and Roughhouse Fargo, Tojo Yamamoto, Jerry Jarrett, Don and Al Greene, etc. I watched every TV show and read every wrestling magazine from then on, wrote the TV results down, even started "booking" my own cards and writing up mock newspaper ads with the stars. I was obsessive."

JC watched wrestling on TV, at home and on family vacations, until May, 1974, when he talked his mother into making the 40 mile round trip to downtown Louisville to see a Battle Royal at the weekly matches. "I spent every Tuesday night of my life for the next 8 years at the Louisville Gardens," he says. "I'd been to the circus, the Globetrotters, the State Fair, but this was the greatest thing I had ever seen."

In January, 1975, JC and his mom obtained reserved seats on the front row of ringside, and he began taking photos with a cheap instamatic camera. The first wrestler ever to pose for him, incredibly, was a prelim guy named Dennis Condrey. Within a year or so, his photos had gotten good enough that other ringsiders were asking for copies. Also, he had met Louisville promoter Christine Jarrett, Jerry's mother.

"Miss Christine was known to the fans as the mother of a star, even though most people in those days had no idea what a promoter actually did. She took interest in me as the biggest fan in Louisville, and became friends with my mother as a result. The TV station started screwing up the local promos, and she asked me to keep track of what aired to make sure



it was right. Being obsessive-compulsive before the disease was ever heard of, I began timing the shows with a stopwatch and presenting her with typed formats of the show every week. I was learning TV formatting, segmenting and timing at 14 years of age."

By summer 1976, JC had purchased a 35mm camera and Mrs. Jarrett had given him permission to shoot at ringside, backstage access for posed photos, and began buying his pictures for resale at the souvenir stand. "My color photos", he says, "professionally printed at a local photo finisher, gradually replaced the old-fashioned, Black & White 8x10 publicity photos, and sales doubled and tripled. Louisville was drawing 3 to 5 thousand fans per WEEK in those days. When the wrestlers got their picture money, and saw my shots, they started buying from me too, to take to the Memphis end for the stands there. By my 15th birthday, I had stumbled into a business doing something just for fun."

Still too young to drive, Jim's mother took him to the matches every week, and to pass the time, she started helping at the picture table and visiting with the weekly regulars. JC was encouraged by Mrs. Jarrett to send his photos to the Wrestling News, the magazine sold at the area arenas, and he soon began writing articles to go with them. Within a year, he was also being published in national newstand magazines like The Wrestler, Inside Wrestling and Pro Wrestling Illustrated, as well as GONG magazine in Japan.

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Jim and Thelma began travelling to the weekly matches in Evansville, Indiana to shoot photos and run the souvenir stand, as well as the monthly events in Lexington, Ky. when Jarrett opened matches up in Rupp Arena in 1978. Occasional trips to Memphis to shoot for the magazines had begun in April, 1977, when JC covered the double main event of Harley Race vs. Rocky Johnson for the World Title and Jerry Lawler vs. Jack Brisco for the Southern Title.

In 1979, JC began doubling as a ring announcer and time-keeper, and was writing the arena programs sold all over the area. "By the time I was 19", he says, "I was going to over 150 shows a year, announcing, shooting photos, writing programs, being published in numerous magazines, and selling bulk photos by the thousands per week to Mrs. Jarrett and the various wrestlers, as well as watching how Miss Christine promoted towns. I was having \$1000 weeks with my little cottage industry, and learning the business from every angle."

While JC began making trips to Memphis more often with best friend Kenny Bolin, Thelma still came to all the "Northern towns" to run the table and visit with Christine, and the two great ladies would remain friends until Mrs. Jarrett's death in the late 90's.

In 1981 came Championship Wrestling Magazine, for which JC did the photos, articles, and layouts, and would have printed, then wholesale to the promoters for sale in the arenas. Published every 3 months or so, print runs of 3,000 would generally sell out within 6 weeks. "I never had an inkling I'd actually be "in the business", JC laughs, "but the two guys I'd gotten closest with, Bobby Fulton and "Dream

Machine" Troy Graham, told me several times on long car trips I would be a booker someday because I studied the business. I thought they were crazy. I never told any of the other talent, even Mrs. Jarrett, that I was "smart" to the business, although of course she knew. In those days, that would have gotten heat. I was never even allowed in the actual locker room until my first day as a manager. The business was protected then, and as history has shown, it was a lot better for the sport that way."

In August 1982, JC went to Memphis to shoot a TV match with Jerry Lawler wrestling Ric Flair. As the show closed, Jerry Jarrett tapped him on the shoulder and said he wanted to talk to him. "I shit my pants", JC laughs. "I thought I had heat."

"Jerry took me into an office and said, "My mother tells me you're smart to our business." As I frantically searched my mind for an answer that wouldn't get me kicked out of the room, he continued. He wanted to make me a manager, with a gimmick that was an offshoot of Playboy Gary Hart's in the 60's, a rich kid from a wealthy family whose mother was financing his way into wrestling. I didn't fit the "playboy" part, but because so many people had seen me with my mom for years, the rest worked."

"Jerry told me to talk to my mom, and if the answer was yes, since it would switch BOTH of us heel, to come to TV next week wearing a suit. My mom knew how bad I wanted to do it, said yes without hesitation, and I was at TV the next week. Jerry Jarrett was a genius, especially in this way--no matter how outrageous wrestling got, there was a logical, credible reason for every gimmick, every stipulation. I debuted on TV, explaining I wanted to buy the con-



tracts of all the top babyfaces and be a hero, not a heel like Jimmy Hart. Of course, I was a clueless putz, and all the fans, as well as Lawler. Dundee and Dutch Mantell made fun of me and blew me off, so when I finally signed heels, it was to get back at people that laughed at me. Originally, it was to be the Fabulous Ones, but when they got over so strong as faces, I went with others. It was for the best, because I wasn't ready for the main events. The guys worked around me until I figured out what I was doing, but after so long around the business, most people thought I picked it up quick."

After several weeks of TV, JC made his ring-side debut in Memphis on September 25, 1982 at the Cook Convention Center, managing Sherri Martell and Leilani Kai in a girl's tag match. For his Mid-South Coliseum debut on October 4th, he managed Dutch Mantell in a Southern Title match against Jerry Lawler. Both Lawler and Dutch were babyfaces, and JC "accidentally" got Dutch disqualified, causing Dutch to fire him after a week.

"My second time at ringside", JC says, "I was in the main event at the Mid-South Colliseum against Jerry Lawler before 5,000 fans. I was scared shitless and almost had a stroke."

In his first few months, JC assembled a "Dynasty of Champions" consisting of Crusher Broomfield (One Man Gang), Jesse Barr, Apocalypse (Mike Boyette) and the Exotic Adrian Street with Miss Linda. Bill Dundee began a program with Street that lasted almost 3 months, and JC set his first attendance record. "The week after a Lawler-Nick Bockwinkle AWA Title match in Memphis drew 10,000 people and \$38,000", he says, "the main event was Adrian, Linda and I against Dundee and referee Jerry Calhoun with no Lawler on the card. It drew 4,000 people and a little over \$16,000, so my 4th match as a "wrestler" set a record for biggest drop ever in Memphis. But I had a ball travelling with and learning from Adrian, one of the most fun periods of my career."

In March, Lawler took over the booking from Dundee, and JC began managing Danny Davis and Ken Wayne as the masked Galaxians, where JC learned how to manage a polished heel team that used intricate teamwork. Then came Duke Myers, who paired with Hart's man Bobby Eaton for a program with the Fabs, winning the Southern Tag Title for a few weeks. In June 1983, the opportunity came for JC to headline a territory as the top manager.

"Jarrett made a deal with Ole Anderson in

Georgia." JC says. "Ole was concentrating his crew on Atlanta's Omni and the Northern Tours, so the Georgia towns were down. Jarrett sent a crew to Georgia to run the towns like Macon, Columbus, Marietta and Augusta, plus Knoxville and Chattanooga, Tn. We did TV every Saturday morning at WRCB-3 in Chattanooga, and ran shows 6 nights per week with a \$65 per show guarantee starting June 11, 1983."

"My last appearance in Memphis was under the Lawler-Dundee loser leaves town match that drew a sellout 11,000+ paying \$46,000, and my first show in Chattanooga drew \$1800, so it was quite a change. Dundee was the booker and top heel, and I managed the Angel (Frank Morrell), Bounty Hunter Jerry Novak, Carl Fergie and Norman Frederick Charles the 3rd."

"The babyfaces were Steve O, the original Fantastics Terry Taylor and Bobby Fulton, the Stray Cat (Ken Wayne), Pat Rose and others. Abruptly replacing the Georgia stars with a crew of then-unknowns in weekly towns got over as you would imagine, and after 6 weeks we had doubled the gates from nothing to next to nothing. Ole came in one day at promos and said, "Don't do this anymore."

"I had learned a lot, especially lessons on being on the road from Frank Morrell, and had also made my TBS debut on July 16th, verbally jousting with Gordon Solie. After Ole closed us down, we were all back in Memphis by the second week of August."

Returning to Memphis, JC was installed as the "co-manager", meaning stooge and understudy, to Jimmy Hart's First Family. "With two towns running every night, I made the spot shows and Jimmy made the big towns. I was frustrated at the time, but I couldn't complain, because Hart was over, I was a rookie, and I was getting a lot of experience managing 4 or 5 matches per night, plus wrestling in either handicap matches, Battle Royals or both on every show. But averaging \$350 a week for 6 days work, I could barely afford to get to the shows.

Then, Watts came to Memphis to scout the talent and changed everything. Fourteen months after his debut as a pro, JC was in Shreveport, Louisiana, starting a journey that would eventually see even his wildest pro wrestling dreams come true. Thank God, the wrestling bear had retired by then.

Chronology

1983-1990

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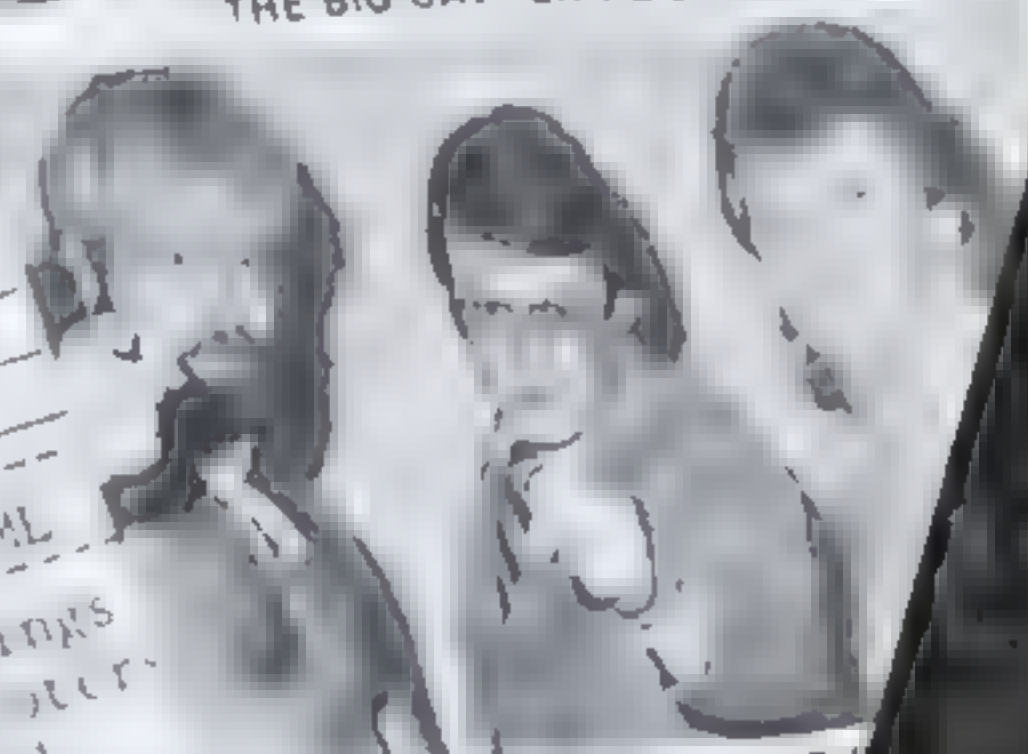
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Thursday	4-25	ELMORE CITY, OKLA	7:30
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OTHER PROMOTERS &
OTHER SITES

Reading The Results

There are only 3 results in wrestling-- baby-face (hero) wins, heel (villain) wins, or a draw. What you DO with them is all-important. Just reading the results doesn't tell the whole story. If the Express lost, they might get heat back afterward by beating up the faces after the bell. If they won, it was often by cheating to necessitate a rematch. If they were disqualified, it might have been just an easy way to retain a title, or because they were doing something so evil it was about to cause a riot, again to set up a rematch. If their opponents were disqualified, it might be because they had finally lost their "tempers" and were giving the MX a taste of their own medicine. In case of a draw, no team was better that night, and it set up, you guessed it, a rematch.

Every finish of every match was done for a reason, whether to get the winner "over" (more popular or unpopular), establish a reason to sell tickets to a rematch, set up a stipulation, or whatever. Figuring finishes and then executing them properly is the ultimate art form in pro wrestling, because each one done correctly makes both participants stronger in the fan's eyes and makes them want to pay to see both again, whether wrestling other opponents or especially each other. That the MX were very good at this is evidenced by them having some of the longest successful "programs" (series of matches with the same opponents) of the 80's. Who won, who lost, and most particularly HOW, was the most important part of pro wrestling until it evolved into "sports entertainment", where the performance itself became what the fans cared about most. The Express were masters of that aspect as well, and when combined with a controversial ending, rematches could potentially draw endlessly until the babyfaces got a clean victory over the heels with no rebuttal.

By the 90's, TV ratings became more important than arena matches, which were the wrestling industry's primary source of revenue since the dawn of the sport, and televised "main events" became commonplace. In the MX's time, TV matches were generally one sided victories for the stars, and the most important part of wrestling TV were the "promos", interviews which got the stars over and hyped the upcoming matches in the arena, and "angles", which were incidents designed to set up a match or grudge

between two feuding parties. All was designed to ultimately sell tickets to live events, and the talent that could do this most successfully were generally used in a main event position, and paid the highest salaries to do so. When guaranteed contracts came into play, this skewed that theory somewhat, and generally led to complacency on the talents' part, as they were paid the same no matter what the gate or their position on the card.

As you will see, the Express and JC started their run in the former environment, and ended it in the latter, but weathered the transitions to become one of the few combinations to excel in all facets and measuring sticks of the sport for almost a decade.

"WHAT WAS THE HOUSE?"

--OR--

UNDERSTANDING THE GATE

The most frequently asked question in pro wrestling history is, "What was the house?" This was the question the wrestlers would ask the promoter at every event, meaning "What were the total gate receipts?"

In the days before guaranteed contracts, the wrestlers were paid, or at least supposed to be paid, on the gate. The bigger the "house", the bigger the payoff. Unlike today, where gates are often exaggerated to make the show sound more successful, in many cases the house was UNDERstated by some promoters, so the wrestlers would expect smaller payoffs. Tales of "the back door being left open" or a "robbery at the box office" are legendary among old-time wrestlers.

RESULTS GLOSSARY

OVER-----defeated
DQ -----disqualification
DDQ-----double disqualification--no winner
COR-----counted out of the ring
DCOR-----double count-out--no winner
DRAW-----time limit draw (time of match follows)
NC -----no contest--match thrown out
REV DEC--reversed decision, loser originally won but referee changed call when illegal tactic was discovered
SO-----Sell Out
REC-----Record Gate



Another difference between the "old days" and the present is that the number of fans was seldom revealed, or even asked about, as except in special cases, the wrestlers didn't care how many paid, just the dollar amount. The gate figures listed in this book are the figures reported to the talent by the promoter, and the promotions the MX worked for were, for the most part, reliable in giving honest figures. The number of fans attending, where given, are rough estimates based on the ticket prices of the time or arena capacity, except where exact figures are listed

Remember that different cities or arenas, even different events in the same place, had different ticket prices--in 1984, for example, a major market like Houston often had tickets at \$15, 12, 8 & 5, so a www.jimcornette.com

\$60,000 gate would be around 7,000 fans with an average price of \$8 to \$9.

Oklahoma City, with tickets at \$15, 10, 8, 6 & 4, would see a \$60,000 gate total between 9 and 10,000 fans because of the large number of general admission tickets. Smaller markets may have an average ticket of \$5, while mega events like Starcade might have an average approaching \$20. It wasn't until the 90's that average ticket prices for pro wrestling in most locations exceeded \$10. So, while some gate records listed in this book have been broken in dollar figures by 2009, many of the figures for number of fans attending still stand and are likely to last a long time, if not forever.

Explaining

“HEAT”

by Jim Cornette

The word “heat” has become a term that’s been meaning today than it did even 20 years ago. Heat is an all-purpose word in pro wrestling. “Getting some heat on him” means a heel beating up a babyface. “He has a lot of heat” means the fans boo and yell at him, or even the other wrestlers or office dislike him. “The match was hot” means the fans were loud and excited and reacted to everything well. There is one more use of the word “heat” in wrestling that is no longer used, at least in the United States and Canada.

The phrase “killing heat”, as applied to a heel who has such heat that the fans literally want to murder him, is no longer used. In an extreme case or two, a wrestler has been killed, but the attempts that failed have been much more numerous. From the dawn of the sport until the mid to late '80's, violent attacks by the fans on the top heel stars were so common in some territories you could count on one at least once a week. As primitive as those times may seem today, the wrestling fans under 30 have never really seen an environment of real “heat” in a wrestling arena, where the fans genuinely hate the heels and love the baby-faces so much that you can feel the emotions in the air.

The crowds would erupt positively or nega-

tively. The fans would literally jump the guard rails to attack the no-good heel because he was beating the crap out of the hero in a pro wrestling match.

I'll get this out of the way early and try not to beat it to death later. Professional wrestling and “sports entertainment” are two different things. Until the mid-to-late '80's, pro wrestling was presented by it's promoters as a real sporting contest. No matter how outlandish the action or flamboyant the “gimmick”, or as they call it these days, the “character”, of the wrestler, an effort was made to cling to some foundation of logic, credibility or legitimacy. No one in the business would admit anything publicly other than wrestling was 100% real. If a disgruntled wrestler did, he was fired at least, blackballed at most. If the fans believed, the conventional wisdom went, they would always come to the shows. If they didn't believe, they wouldn't.

No one ever really tested that logic, and pro wrestling drew for 75 years, in nearly every city and state, for dozens of promoters across the country, and became a TV phenomenon for 35 years. A large segment of the population knew pro wrestling was “fake” (they didn't know the term “work”) but nobody knew



for was exactly THAT day when almost no other segment watched pro wrestling on TV, much more than the 5 million or so per week that watch on national cable today, because they were watching shows produced by the regional promoters in every major market on highly-rated local broadcast stations.

The most dedicated of that group, literally in the hundreds of thousands per week, attended the weekly or monthly matches in their local arenas, and the gates of the live events were the life-blood of the promoters and the wrestlers. The fans who attended the house shows were a concentrated group of the people most likely to believe some, much, or all of the action was legitimate. Don't listen to anyone who tells you "Nobody ever believed wrestling was real", because they did, and lots of them. Why else then, would fans hate the bad guy in a "fake" wrestling match so badly that they would willingly go to jail to spit on him, punch him, stab him, even shoot him?

This emotion, this passion in wrestling required the pretense of sport and realism. Fans don't make the extreme emotional investment in sports entertainment because they are aware it's a more controlled, scripted environment. This has opened wrestling up to national TV, pay per view, merchan-

dising, and the creation of a multimillion dollar industry in a fortune now. Many more were gamfully employed thirty years ago than today, but it was harder to reach that six-figure income level of stardom. The sport has seen many changes, but one thing completely lost is the "heat" in the arena that you can cut with a knife, a heat which was also responsible for selling so many tickets to so many shows in so many cities. The fans came until the good guy won in the end.

To do that, he had to beat a bad guy that people bought tickets to see whipped. The main event heels in wrestling were highly sought after and paid well if they could sell out arenas against a promoter's top faces, especially since one of them was often the promoter himself. The heels used every trick to get heat, to convince the fans they were liars, cheats, thieves, trash talkers, crooks, con men, braggarts, ego-maniacs, psychopaths, cowards, back-jumpers or otherwise possessed of any contemptible character trait that would make them unworthy of human compassion.

As a result, the times most heels were in danger of injury were not when they were wrestling, but going either to and from the ring, or leaving the arena

after a "hot" match. The match was fun-- you had to fight the fans for real. Examples of the personal hatred good heels could engender are infinite and extreme.

In Louisville, Ky. in 1976, it was announced to the Gardens wrestling crowd that hated heel manager Sam Bass had been killed in a car wreck the previous night, and the arena erupted in cheers. The same thing happened in an arena in Florida when Bobby Shane died in a plane crash. Conversely, the love, even hero worship, most fans had for the top faces could be more akin to that for a best friend or member of the family than sports hero or celebrity, illustrated by the death of David Von Erich in 1984, which became a Dallas media event with thousands of crying fans attending the funeral.

Magnum TA's career-ending car accident in Charlotte in 1986 saw fans jam the hospital switchboard, hold candlelight vigils, and watch the TV news for constant updates. Whitey Caldwell, the legendary top babyface in East Tennessee for 15 years, was killed in a car wreck in 1972, and fans were still placing flowers on his grave 20 years after his death.

These incredibly polarized feelings were whipped into a frenzy in a clash between a top face and top heel, or two top teams. With full knowledge of what dastardly, reprehensible deed the heel had done to the face to bring the match about, the fans watched to see if their hero would get even. If he did, they "popped", a huge, spontaneous eruption of cheers and applause that has sent goose bumps down every

wrestler's spine. The face became it showed they loved him, and the heel because they hated him. If the face DIDN'T get even, this set the opposite reaction in motion--the fans were "hot", or mad. A chorus of boos, throwing things, screaming, cussing and jumping up and down meant you had great heat--fans wanting to take over where the face left off and beat you up themselves was too MUCH heat, but you couldn't always control these things.

"Silent heat" was the worst, where the arena went almost silent before erupting, and for some reason it usually prefaced the worst trouble. One more thing stirred the emotional pot--blood. Until the '80's, blood was used often in the arenas, but only sparingly and for major angles on television. Few knew the secrets of blood in wrestling, and for those in the arenas, where they could see stories of "blood capsules" weren't true and it was REAL blood, it helped their belief that things had gotten "out of hand".

I never saw a drop of fake blood in wrestling until the late '90's sports entertainment. In years past, in a hot match, blood kicked the emotions way up, because it was presented as a credible result of the fight. Either the heel had cheated and bloodied the face, putting him at risk of "serious injury", or the face had bloodied the heel as a "taste of his own medicine" while going for revenge. Today, after the hardcore wrestling fad, fans have seen wrestlers bleed buckets from every part of their bodies, and it has only a fraction of the impact it once had. Anyone with internet

To: Jim Cornette

From: Jim Herd

Date: June 25, 1990

Subject: Incident in Columbia, S.C.

The evidence at hand more than substantiates the fact that you were attacked by a fan in Columbia, South Carolina.

The memorandum, therefore, is only to reiterate to you that World Championship Wrestling will not tolerate retaliatory actions of any nature by wrestlers or managers in their employ.

The very nature of our business foundation in part, is to separate fans into love, hate groups by design and therefore we must keep our composure when they over react.

Please assure us that this will not happen in the future and I will assure you that where needed we will beef up our security forces.

J. Petrik

access can find out how it takes place. But in previous generations, blood in a wrestling match in the right environment could lead to a riot. Incidences of fan violence in wrestling over the years are countless due to the sheer number of shows and wrestlers, and every veteran has a book of stories. Here are some examples, and I assure you, they all really happened.

BOSTON, 1971--A fan jumped in the ring in the Boston Garden and slashed Blackjack Mulligan, challenging Pedro Morales for the WWWF Title, with a knife. Mulligan needed close to 200 stitches to close the gash. The fan got away.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, 1957--Heels Dick the Bruiser and Dr. Jerry Graham started a riot in a tag match against Antonino Rocca and Edouard Carpentier with a bloody finish that whipped the fans into a froth. Fans rushed the ring, threw chairs, tore up the Garden and injured police officers, the incident was news for a week, and it led to a law banning kids under 14 from wrestling events at the Garden which stood until the '70's.

NEW ORLEANS, 1980--The Freebirds were about to attack Junkyard Dog at ringside in the
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Downtown Auditorium. Dog was "blind and helpless" from a previous attack. A fan leaped the rail and leveled a pistol at the heels, telling Dog "Don't worry, I got 'em!" before he was tackled by the cops.

CLEVELAND, 1973--Heels Ox Baker and Johnny Powers were beating bloodied face Ernie Ladd unmercifully when the arena exploded. Fans threw dozens of chairs into the ring, then began climbing in to fight. The outnumbered police were using nightsticks and mace trying to keep the fans out of the ring, and several faces finally hit the ring to "fight the heels back", probably saving their lives. Baker suffered a huge gash on his head from a fan's chairshot. This riot was actually caught on film.

HARLAN, KENTUCKY, early '70's--East Tennessee wrestling legend Ron Wright may have had more heat per capita than any heel in history. From the late '50's to the mid '70's he was the top heel in the small mountain territory, and had numerous close calls. He was shot at on the highway, stabbed in the back with a hunting knife by a fan in Greenville, Tn., requiring 75 stitches, and holds the record for most unique episode of fan violence. Wright flew a single

engine plane to his bookings in the mountains. One night in Harian, the fans bear him back to the air strip and burned his plane to the ground.

AWA, 1975--During an AWA World Title match with champion Nick Bockwinkel and manager Bobby Heenan defending against Verne Gagne in Minneapolis, a fan pulled a gun and fired several shots at the ring, then fled. No one in the match was hit, but ringsiders were.

GREENVILLE, S.C., '70's--Mega heel Ole Anderson was stabbed in the chest by an elderly fan after a match, taking 100 stitches and coming close to vital organs.

ALABAMA, 1980's--Dennis Condrey still has a scar on his arm where he was cut with a knife by a fan when he was leaving the ring. While trying to fend off the fan with the knife, he was hit from behind by another attacker and pushed into the blade. The guy with the knife did not enjoy the rest of his night.

Overall, if you were a top heel in wrestling, you were going to have trouble with fans on a somewhat regular basis, the security or police were sometimes going to dislike you just as much as the fans did because they believed as well, and you were going to be either arrested or sued for fighting back almost as regularly. I'm not saying the Express and I were even close to the hottest heels of all time, and the guys in the earlier eras had it much worse, but we were known for getting a lot of heat in our matches, and most fans thought they could whip me with one hand, and many were correct. So please bear that in mind as you read the rest of the book, and don't think we were a bunch of lunatics running around clubbing people with a tennis racket.

Whether it sounds like it or not, none of us ever hit anybody that didn't hit us first. Mid-South Wrestling had especially aggressive fans, because Bill Watts elicited such powerful emotion with his style of wrestling. Lake Charles, La. had good police security, so since the fans couldn't touch the wrestlers going to and from the ring, they tried putting Drano in water guns and shooting them in the eyes, or cutting their

tires and glueing the keylocks on their cars. The original inspiration for the tennis racket was protection from the fans.

I saw a "teen movie" in Nashville right as we were starting work for Watts, and the rich kid in the group carried a badminton racquet. I upsized to a tennis racket and began using it in the matches, but also used it to fight off attacking fans. In some locations, I loaded it up with a horseshoe that had been thrown at me in Tulsa. Some of the towns, especially Tulsa and Little Rock, were so rowdy that I bought a used bullet-proof vest from a cop that worked the matches. He said, "They probably won't shoot you, but the vest would help with knives and that's a real concern here."

Remarks like that really made me feel safe. I would wear the vest under my suit anywhere that seemed dodgy. It was always something different. One night, I got back to the locker room and saw that someone had vomited down my pants leg. In Alexandria, La., after we "tarred and feathered" Magnum TA on TV, the fans did it to Bobby's car. In Tulsa, a fan jumped over cops to punch me square in the nose. Blood flying, we all fought and pushed to the back, where we saw Bill Watts standing on the guy's head with both feet, lecturing him about attacking his wrestlers while the cops waited patiently to toss the guy out. Every trip back from the ring in Houston saw beer bottles whizzing down from the balcony.

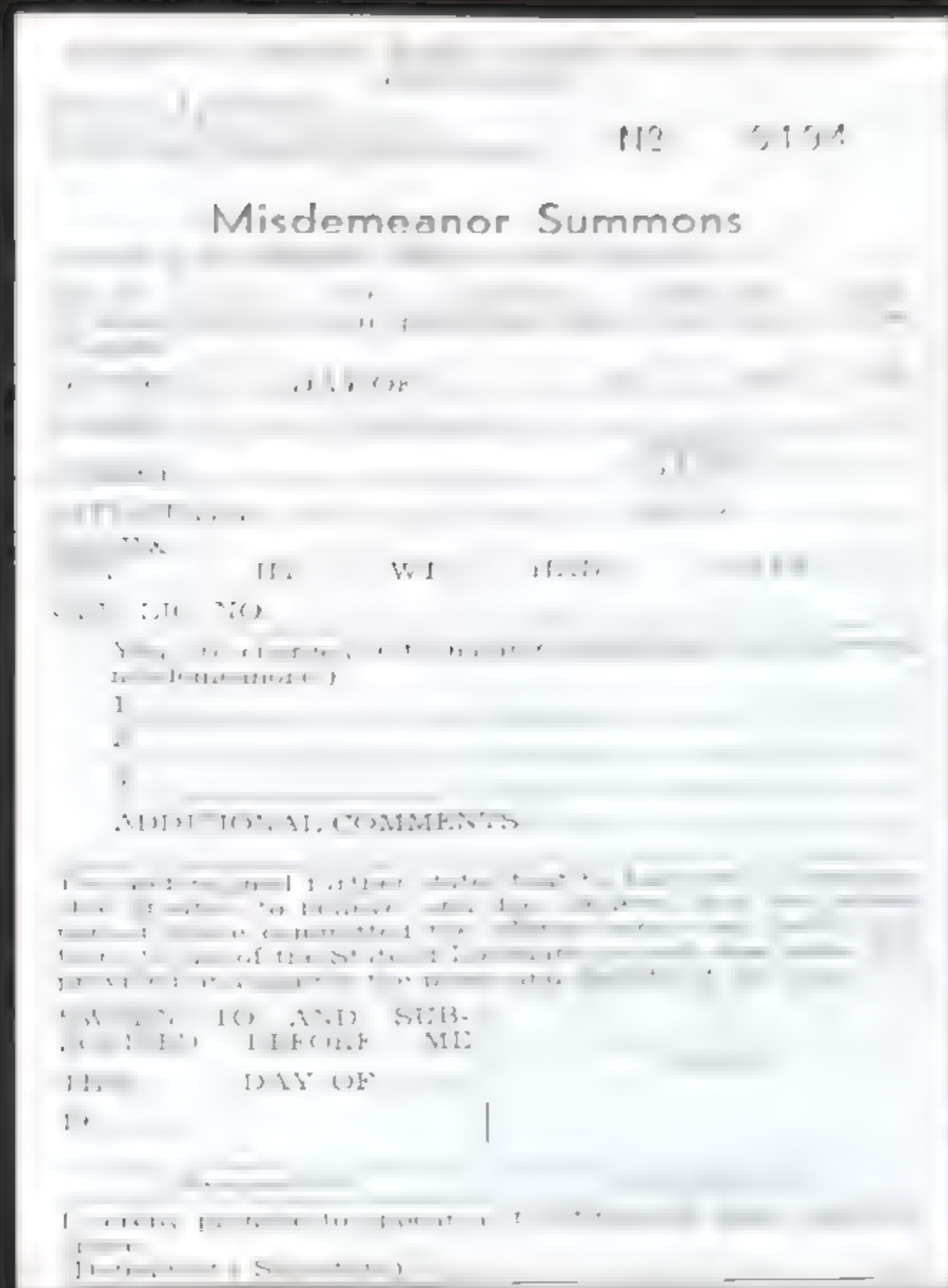
In Huntington, W. Va., we were mobbed by fans after a match with the Rock & Roll Express. The aisle was too narrow, the cops too few, the walk too long and the crowd too mad, and we ended up swinging at everything around us and running for our lives to the back. I had 5 warrants for assault filed against me and could have filed 15 or 20, if I'd known who the hell was hitting me, on that one trip back.

In Houma, La., Dennis and I were getting into the car when a dozen or so Cajuns surrounded us. One of them threw a beer can at Dennis, he ducked. An arm barred the guy and sent him face first into the

gravel, which meant one down, eleven to go, when the babyfaces hit their bright lights and drove their car into the crowd, giving us a chance to get away. On several occasions, we needed to show a gun to be able to get out of a particular place unmolested. We were often escorted out by K-9 officers, we guarded our home addresses, and often took different routes home. It wasn't paranoia, people DID try to follow us. In our 7 years together, the number of fans who willingly went to jail to attack one of us easily numbers over a hundred, with the amount never apprehended or charged even higher.

That type of emotion led to a lot of headaches, but also to big crowds, exciting matches and great paychecks as well. Now that you know what "heat" used to be, perhaps you can have a better understanding or a different perspective on the rest of this book, and why all the old-time fans say it's just "not like it used to be".

Baton Rouge, La. 1984 (right)
Altoona, Pa. 1990 (bottom)



Wrestling fan knocked out at ringside

ALTOONA, Pa. (AP) — A spectator at a professional wrestling show was knocked unconscious briefly after being struck with a tennis racket at ringside by the manager of a grappling tag-team.

Mark Williams, 42, of Altoona, was struck Friday night while attending the event at the Jaffa Mosque. He regained consciousness at Mercy Hospital, where he was treated and released.

Police said Williams sustained a three-inch gash on the top of his head after James Mark Cornette, 29, hit him with a tennis racket. Cornette is the manager of the wrestling tag team of Bobby Eaton and Stan Lane, who are known as Midnight Express.

Versions of the incident differ,

police said.

Cornette and Eaton said Williams charged the ring and began scratching at the wrestler, who grabbed the spectator and held him. Cornette then wielded the tennis racket and struck Williams.

Williams' wife said her husband was standing behind a railing at ringside taking photographs. She said Cornette then walked over to Williams and hit him with the racket.

Security guards escorted Williams from the arena, but he returned. He collapsed while being taken from the hall a second time.

Police were investigating the circumstances of the incident to decide whether to bring charges, said Sgt. John Carnicella.

Genesis

As 1983 drew to a close in the Memphis wrestling territory, Bobby Eaton was a babyface working the middle of the cards. Dennis Condrey was a heel teaming with Norvell Austin and only slightly higher on the roster, and Jim Cornette was the "assistant" to Jimmy Hart, making the small town spot shows while Hart managed the top heels in the major cities.

While Eaton and Condrey were both top veterans who had been mainstays in the area's main events for years, they had simply been in the same territory too long. Cornette was young and eager, but had only been in the business for 14 months, and was green, while Hart had been area's the top heel manager for over 4 years. In fact, Memphis was just overloaded with talent, too many wrestlers and many of them stale in their current roles. Promoter Jerry Jarrett was looking to pare down his cards after a booming summer that had seen Memphis draw over 8,000 fans every Monday night between Memorial Day and Labor Day, and business strong all over the territory in cities like Louisville and Lexington, Ky., and Nashville, Tn. With business dropping heading into winter, there were too many mouths to feed on the cards.

The Memphis territory's southwest border ended at Mid-South Wrestling's northeast border. In Mid-South, business was down, in some cities badly, and promoter Bill Watts was looking for new faces to spice up his own cards. Watts and Jarrett made a talent trade agreement—Watts could have anyone from Memphis except Jerry Lawler, and Jarrett could have anyone from Mid-South except Junkyard Dog.

Watts visited the Memphis Mid-South Coliseum on November 14, 1983, to look at the talent. "I did a lot that night", Cornette remembers, "which was a surprise since at that point I wasn't even ON some of the Memphis cards. I realized later that Jarrett was giving me a great audition to get rid of me. He saw I had potential, but there was no way I'd get over Hart while in his shadow. If I went somewhere else, I could sink or swim on my own."

Watts ended up picking Condrey and Eaton to form a heel team with Cornette managing them, plus Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson, the Rock & Roll Express, who in Memphis were the teenybopper idol "understudies" of Stan Lane and Steve Keirn, the Fabulous Ones. Also chosen was Terry Taylor, another

talented babyface, and the final piece of the puzzle, Bill Dundee.

Dundee had been a top star in Memphis for 10 years, but had recently lost the booking position to Lawler. Watts recruited him to replace his booker, Ernie Ladd, who was winding down his wrestling career after two decades of worldwide stardom. Watts asked Condrey if he had a good name for this brand new tag team, and Dennis suggested The Midnight Express. A few days later, Condrey told Cornette that they were all going to Louisiana to be the top heel team and make \$100,000 a year. "I was so green", Cornette said, "and so low on the totem pole I had never even spoken to Watts. I thought Dennis was playing a really mean rib on me until the plane tickets showed up."

Cornette, however, did suggest using the song "Chase" from the Midnight Express movie soundtrack as the team's entrance music, since music for the top stars was just becoming popular in wrestling, and that song remains identified with the Express 25 years later. Excited at the opportunity but not really knowing what to expect, the three were flown to Shreveport, Louisiana on the day before Thanksgiving, November 23, 1983, to debut on Mid-South Wrestling television and begin being groomed as the top heel team in the territory.

MID-SOUTH WRESTLING

MSW was a larger territory than Memphis, both geographically and in terms of major markets and arenas. It covered the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma, plus Eastern Texas including the wrestling hotbed of Houston, which was promoted by the legendary Paul Boesch using MSW talent. Even with all these large cities and arenas, there were no professional sports in any of the markets except for New Orleans and Houston, so wrestling was the only game in town. In addition, many of these cities were isolated—there were no North-South interstates in Louisiana or Arkansas, and Oklahoma City and Tulsa were the only major cities in the otherwise-barren state of Oklahoma, so travel was challenging, the distances from one end of the area to the other great, and little in the way of touring entertainment.

MSW's business was conducted very differently as well—Cowboy Bill Watts, one of the top wrestlers and promoters in the game for 20 years, was also legendary for his strict guidelines of how a wrestling promotion should be run. His company pro-



Bill Watts

ected the business, it's secrets and credibility, better than any U.S. promotion of the past 40 years. The syndicated television program did huge ratings, in the 20's and 30's, on strong broadcast affiliates in every city. MSW had it's stereotypical "rasslin fans", Cajuns down South

and cowboys in the West, but it also numbered doctors, lawyers and professionals among it's fans due to it's serious, pro-sports based presentation.

Watts was known for his ability to engender REAL emotion from the fans, and put incredible heat on his heels, with altercations and riots from the true-believers almost commonplace. Political connections in each state and contracts to run the big arenas in each city up to 25 times a year ensured MSW could weather any encroachment from the WWF, which was just beginning to expand nationally. Even though business was down in 1983, the infrastructure was in place for pro wrestling to achieve great success, and Watts had shocked the wrestling world in the late 70's and early 80's by drawing huge crowds to the New Orleans Superdome, just a few years after starting his company. This time, the fresh faces from Tennessee and Bill Dundee's new approach to booking would be the catalysts to MSW's all-time record year.

Even after 1984, and during the early years of WWF expansion, business would remain stronger than in most territories until something unrelated to the wrestling product—the oil bust and subsequent economic recession in MSW's core cities—led to Watts selling the company (by then called the Universal Wrestling Federation) to Jim Crockett in 1987.

That was all in the future on November 23, 1983 as the Midnight Express and Jim Cornette debuted on Mid-South television. The Express ride to the top was about to begin.

NOVEMBER 1983

23 Shreveport, La. TV

MX over Rick Rood (Rude) & Mike Jackson

MX over Lanny Poffo & Josh Stroud

DECEMBER 1983

7 Shreveport, La. TV

MX over George Weingeroff & John King

MX over Weingeroff & Randy Barber

MX over Mike Jackson & KoKo

www.jimcornette.com

25 New Orleans, La.	MX over Poffo & Rood	
26 Monroe, La.	MX over Poffo & Rood	
27 Shreveport, La.	MX over Poffo & Rood	
28 OFF		
29 Biloxi, Miss.	MX over Poffo & Rood	\$8,000
30 Houston, Tx.	MX over Poffo & Rood	\$29,000
31 Okla. City, Ok.	MX over Poffo & Rood	\$65,000

JANUARY 1984

1 Little Rock, Ark.	MX over Poffo & Rood	\$10,000
2 New Orleans	MX over Weingeroff & John King	\$23,000
3 Baton Rouge, La.	MX over Poffo & Rood	
4 Shreveport TV--	MX over Rood & Joe Savoldi MX over Poffo & Weingeroff	
5 Jackson, Miss.	MX over Poffo & Rood	\$12,000
6 Lake Charles, La.	MX over Poffo & Weingeroff	\$6,800
7 Alexandria, La.	MX over Poffo & Savoldi	\$8,800
8 Oklahoma City	MX over Rood & Savoldi	\$35,000
9 Tulsa, Ok.	MX over Rood & Poffo	
10 Shreveport	MX over Rood & Savoldi	
11 Loranger, La.	MX DDQ Mr. Wrestling 2 & Magnum TA	
12 Port Arthur, Tx.	MX over Poffo & Rood	\$7,000
13 Houston, Tx.	MX over Poffo & El Bracero	\$42,000
14 Houma, La.	MX over Poffo & Rood	\$6,000
15 Alexandria 2pm	MX over Rood & Savoldi	\$8,100
Monroe, La. 8pm	MX DDQ #2 & TA	\$8,800
16 New Orleans	MX over Poffo & Savoldi	\$24,000
17 Lake Charles, La.	MX DDQ #2 & TA	\$5,200
18 Shreveport TV--	MX over Mike Jackson & Roger Bond	
19 Biloxi, Miss	#2 & TA over MX DQ	\$12,000
20 Jackson, Miss.	MX DDQ #2 & TA	\$7,000
21 Little Rock	MX over Savoldi & Weingeroff	
22 Lafayette, La.	MX over Poffo & Weingeroff	
23 New Orleans	MX over #2 & TA DQ	\$41,000
(The Express' first main event match in MSW after several weeks of undercard wins was this non-title match with champions Wrestling 2 & Magnum TA, a bloody DQ which jumped the gate \$17,000 from the previous event)		
24 OFF		
25 Vicksburg, Miss.	MX over Poffo & Weingeroff	
26 Shreveport	MX over 2 & TA DQ	\$15,100
27 Houston	MX over 2 & TA DQ	\$51,000
28 Alexandria	MX over Savoldi & Weingeroff	
29 Oklahoma City 2pm	MX over Poffo & Weingeroff	\$61,000
Tulsa 8pm	MX over Poffo & Savoldi	\$31,000

FEBRUARY 1984

MX over Brian Adias & Tommy Heggie

JYD & TA over MX DO \$10,800 (SO)

11 Shreveport MX over 2 & TA Non-Title \$22,000

15 Shreveport TV MX over Savoldi & Weingeroff

#2 & TA over MX DO	\$8,600
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Presents A

or

7:30 p.m.

and

vs.

With Jim Cornett

VS.

VS.

27 Baton Rouge MX over #2 & TA Non-Title\$10,600

v2.

\$1000 of Terry Taylor's victory was a prize he can take home.

**GIRLS
Princess
Victoria
vs.
Wendy
Richter**

ys.

VS.

**BRIAN ADAMS
VS.
JERRY GREY**

ADMISSION

ADVANCE TICKETS ON SALE AT
COLISEUM OFFICE

28 Alexandria MX over #2 & TA Non-Title \$14,000

29 Shreveport TV--

MX over Wrestling #2 & John King

Rock & Roll Express over MX DQ

The first-ever MX-R&R Express match was a six minute, fast paced high spot match ending with the Russians running in for a DQ, and meant to give the fans a taste of what was to come.

MARCH 1984

1 Biloxi Miss. MX over #2 & TA Non-Title \$15,000

2 Hammond, La. MX over #2 & TA Non-Title

\$37,000

3 Jackson, Miss. MX over #2 & TA Non-Title

\$11,000

This was a sellout in the 1,500 seat Armory building.

4 Okla. City MX over #2 & TA Non-Title \$51,000

This event, with a loaded lineup, drew 10,125 fans paying \$51,000 to sell out the Fairgrounds Coliseum, with 800 more turned away.

5 Tulsa MX over #2 & TA \$32,000

6 OFF

7 Lake Charles, La. MX over #2 & TA \$16,800

8 Baton Rouge La. #2 & TA over MX MSTTC

\$10,600

A running joke in Mid-South the local promoter in Baton Rouge was not widely noted for integrity, and it seemed every house, no matter how small was reported as \$10,600)

9 Houston, Tx. #2 & TA over MX MSTTC \$54,000

10 Alexandria MX over 2 & TA Non-Title

11 Loranger, La. 2pm

MX over TA & Terry Taylor \$5,400

Houma, La. 8pm MX over TA & Taylor \$6,900
12 New Orleans

Bruise Brothers over MX DQ \$36,000

Memphis mainstays Porkchop Cash & The Dream Machine Troy Graham were imported for several shots, beginning here, to face the MX, underneath the JYD-Wrestling #2 main event, with JYD losing and leaving Mid-South for 60 days. The event drew a sellout 5,000+ fans to the Downtown Municipal Auditorium, known as "The Dog's House".

13 Lafayette, La.

MX over #2 & TA TO WIN MSTTC \$13,600

The Express win their first title, the Mid-South Tag Team Championship, before a sellout of 2,000 fans—Wrestling #2 walked out on TA after the loss, turning heel, and Terry Taylor came out to take half the 10 lashes that the losing team was to receive per pre-match agreement.



JC blinds Mr. Wrestling 2--Houston, Tx.

14 Shreveport TV MX over Josh Stroud & Obie Davis
 (This TV taping was the most important night in the Express' careers, the night that made them stars. Holding a victory party for winning the belts, JC's face was smashed into the cake by the Rock & Roll Express. After Watts replayed the incident, Cornette confronted him with a tirade that culminated with JC insulting Watts' family and son. Watts responded by slapping JC into next week. Later in the night, the Express attacked Watts with a slapjack and left him bloody and unconscious. The MSW fans were shocked and outraged, and Watts announced that he was coming out of his 3 year retirement as an active wrestler for a "one-time" match (actually held once in each major city in the area) called the Last Stampede.

As it played out for several weeks on TV, Watts recruited Stagger Lee, the Junkyard Dog's masked alter ego, to be his partner. The stipulations were if Watts' team lost, Cornette would win controlling interest in MSW, but if the MX lost, Cornette would be stripped down and either dressed in his "Mama's" pink dress, or a diaper and be fed a baby bottle, depending on the city. With Watts having been the area's top wrestling star of the previous 20 years, JYD the biggest star of the previous 5, and the MX and JC the hottest heel team in MSW since the Fabulous Freebirds, the stage was set for record business.

15 Little Rock MX over #2 & TA MSTTC \$27,600
 16 Monroe, La. MX over #2 & TA MSTTC

(With TV not having aired yet, and pre-internet, #2 & TA had 2 more matches as a team before their split aired.)

17 Greenwood, Miss. MX over #2 & Bill Dundee (SO-REC) \$11,600

18 Alexandria 2pm MX over #2 & Weingeroff \$96,000

Lake Charles 8pm R&R over MX DQ \$11,000 19
 New Orleans R&R over MX Non-Title

20 OFF

21 Shreveport La. MX over R&R Non-Title \$11,100

22 Biloxi Miss, MX over R&R \$21,000

23 Houston Tx.

MX over H. Guerrero & El Bracero \$43,000

24 Baton Rouge La.

MX over R&R Non-Title \$22,000

25 Oklahoma City 2pm

Bruise Bros over MX DQ \$49,000

Tulsa 8pm Bruise Bros over MX DQ \$31,000

26 New Orleans La.

36

Bruise Bros over MX DQ \$18,000

27 Little Rock Ak. R&R over MX DQ Non-Title \$25,000

28 Shreveport TV MX over Mike Jackson & Jeff Young

29 Greenville, Miss. R&R over MX DQ Non-Title \$8,000

30 Marksville, La. TA & T Taylor over MX DQ Non-Title

31 Jena, La. 2pm R&R over MX DQ Non-title

Monroe, La. 8pm MX over Dundee & Porkchop Cash \$19,500

(Troy Graham suffered a career-ending ankle injury in Memphis and was unable to make the rest of their dates.)

APRIL 1984

1 Port Arthur, Tx. 2PM MX over Chops & Dundee Lafayette, La. 8PM R&R over MX DQ \$18,500(SO)

2 Baton Rouge La. MX over Chops & Dundee

3 Shreveport Watts & SLee over MX \$26,500

The first match with Watts and Stagger Lee sold out at higher prices than the 2/11 sellout, setting a new gate record with hundreds turned away.

4 Jackson, Miss. MX over Chops & Dundee \$28,500

5 Crossett, Ark. R&R over MX DQ Non-Title \$10,000

6 Houston Tx. MX over Chops & Dundee MSTTC \$54,000

7 NEW ORLEANS SUPERDOME--

MX over Chops & Dundee w/Jimmy Hart

Watts & Stagger Lee over MX \$176,000

This was the second biggest Dome gate of all time, trailing only the JYD-Michael Hayes Dog Collar match in 1980 which drew \$183,000. This was the only city in Mid-South that the match did not set the all-time gate record in. JC flew Mama Cornette in to see the match, but she was so "hot" from the TV references to her, that she had to watch from one of the skyboxes with security for fear the fans would go after her.)

8 Okla. City MX over Chops & Dundee MSTTC \$68,800

This event set the record for number of fans in the Myriad Arena, MSW's regular arena in OKC, with over 12,000 paid—the big building had a cheap G.A. ticket so the average price was low, but this record would only stand until the next event.

9 Little Rock Ark. MX over Chops and Dundee \$25,000

10 Lake Charles MX over R&R MSTTC \$15,000

11 Shreveport TV MX over ? & ?

★ Wrestling Program ★

THE BEST OF TEXAS WRESTLING INC.



PAUL ROESCH Promoter & President

PETER BIRKHOLZ Asst. Promoter & Vice President

SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 1984

HOUSTON, TEXAS

PHONE 659-7793

SUPER SUNDAY EXTRAVAGANZA!!!
COWBOY BILL WATTS & STAGGER LEE BATTLE
THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS MANAGED BY JIM CORNETT!
2 TITLE MATCHES!! 24 WRESTLERS!! 10 BOUTS!!



STAGGER LEE

Without any life I've been to your funeral

Tonight Cowboy Bill Watts, 40, of retirement with Stagger Lee to face The Midnight Express and the manager Jim Cornett. If The Midnight Express loses, then Jim Cornett is to be stripped down and put in his mommy's dress in the middle of the ring. If Cowboy Bill Watts and Stagger Lee lose, then Stagger Lee must unmask and Cowboy Bill Watts must work for Jim Cornett for six months.

"There comes a time when a man has just got to do things for himself. That is why I'm out of retirement. To put an end to the loud-mouth sissy Cornett. Lining the money doesn't do any good because he just

gets his mother to pay the fines. There is only one way to defeat this man and that is to embarrass him so bad that he will find out that there are people better than he is! And Cornett, that is just what I'm going to do tonight! We went out and got one of your mommy's dresses and if you lose we are going to strip you down and put it on you! This is one time that you have spoken a little too soon, Cornett, because it looks like I'm going to have the last laugh. I just hope that all the people brought their cameras so that they can remember this time for a long time. I know I will and I'm sure Cornett will!" said Cowboy Bill Watts.

HOUSTON WRESTLING RETURNS TO COLISEUM ERI., MAY 11!
ANOTHER BLOCKBUSTER CARD BEING SIGNED!!! WATCH TV FOR DETAILS!!!
TICKET PRICES FOR MAY 11 ARE... \$12... \$10... \$7... BE SURE TO GET YOUR TICKETS EARLY!!!

LAC SPORTS

Charlie D'Amico's Presents

Presents

Charlie D'Amico's SPRING SPECTACULAR

Rapides Parish Coliseum

Saturday, April 28

7:30 pm

The LAST STAMPEDE

COWBOY BILL WATTS

and

STAGGER LEE

vs.

THE MIDNITE XPRESS
with JIM CORNETT

The Midnite Express won Watts & Lee over MX for 6 months. This was the first time in 10 years that a team has won the title. The Midnite Express is a new team that has been formed by Jim Cornett and Stagger Lee. They are a very tough team and will be a real challenge for Watts & Lee.

For The NORTH AMERICAN TITLE



MAGNUM T.A.

vs.

MR. WRESTLING

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!

A Tornado Tag Team Bout!

Fall no DQ — all four men in the ring at the same time, but they will have taped fists and the bout can be won by a pin fall or a DQ.

HACKSAW JIM DUGGAN

and

TERRY TAYLOR

vs.

KRUSHER KRUSCHEV

and

HACKSAW
BUTCH REED

RICKEY MORTON

vs.

NATURE BOY
BUDDY LANDELL

STEVE
DOCTOR DEATH
WILLIAMS

vs.

JERRY GREY

LEAPING
LANNY POFFO

vs.

MR. WRESTLING II
(Mr. Wrestling's New Protege')

JEFF YOUNG
vs.
MASAO ITO

TONY TORRES
vs.
PAT ROSE

ADMISSION

Ringside.....\$10.00

Reserved.....\$8.00

General Admission.....\$7.00

CHILDREN

UNDER 12.....\$4.00

ADVANCE TICKETS ON SALE AT
COLISEUM OFFICE

MX over R&R Express MSTTC

(MX beat R&R when JC ran in dressed as a woman and KO'd Morton with a loaded purse.)

12 Biloxi Watts & Lee over MX \$35,000

13 Baton Rouge Watts & Lee over MX \$48,000

14 Brookhaven, Miss. 2pm

R&R over MX DQ Non-Title \$5,700

Alexandria 8pm

MX over Chops & Dundee MSTTC \$14,000 15

Beaumont, TX. 2pm MX over Chops & Dundee

Houston, TX 8pm MX over Chops & Dundee

Watts & Lee over MX

This

match set the following records for the Sam Houston Coliseum, an historic wrestling arena-- most fans in the arena for any event ever with approximately 12,000, biggest gate ever at \$102,000, and police estimates of 2,000 to 3,000 turned away at the door-- Jimmy Hart flew in from Memphis to manage Porkchop & Dundee.

16 New Orleans R&R over MX Non Title

17 Fort Polk, La. MX over R&R Non Title \$14,000

18 Greenville, Miss.

Watts & Lee over MX \$15,000 (SO-REC)

19 Jackson, Miss. Watts & Lee over MX \$63,000

Over 9,000 fans packed the Jackson

Fairgrounds Coliseum, setting a gate record and the most fans to see a wrestling match there in 20 years.

20 Shreveport RX over MX Non Title

21 Monroe, La. Watts & Lee over MX \$23,000

22 Oklahoma City 2pm

Watts & Lee over MX \$97,000 (SO-REC)

Tulsa 8pm Watts & Lee over MX \$50,000 (SO-REC)

This was one of the most amazing days in the

Alexandria, La. (Left)
Superdome (Below)



DELUXE - FORM WVC-3 V-SPL

DATE	EARNED	ADVANCED	AMOUNT DUE	860	854
4-3	Shreveport		400.00		
4	Jackson		300.00		
5	Crossette		200.00		
6	Houston		500.00		
7	S. Dome		2000.00		
8	Ok.City		600.00		
9	Little Rock		300.00	860	4,300.00
	Travel allowance		125.00	854	125.00

MID-SOUTH SPORTS, INC.
TULSA, OKLAHOMA

DETACH AND RETAIN THIS STATEMENT
THE ATTACHED CHECK IS IN PAYMENT OF ITEMS DESCRIBED BELOW
IF NOT CORRECT PLEASE NOTIFY US PROMPTLY NO RECEIPT DESIRED

16341

DELUXE - FORM WVC-3 V-SPL

DATE	EARNED	ADVANCED	AMOUNT DUE	860	854
4-17	Ft. Polk		225.00		
18	Greenville		300.00		
19	Jackson		1000.00		
20	Shreveport		170.00		
21	Monroe		400.00		
22	Ok.City		1500.00		
	Tulsa		750.00		
23	New Orleans		200.00	860	4,545.00
	Travel allowance		125.00	854	125.00

MX'S careers—at the Myriad in Oklahoma City, about 12,000 fans paid \$97,000, with an estimate of anywhere from 2,000 to 4,000 fans turned away at the door. A computer snafu in the box office saw about 500 General Admission tickets unsold by mistake, or the gate would have topped \$100,000. 90 miles away in Tulsa, the evening event at the Fairgrounds Coliseum set another record with a sellout of over 7,000 paying \$50,000, with an unknown number turned away. The total for the day—almost 20,000 fans paying almost \$150,000 with enough turned away between the two cities to fill a mid-sized arena themselves.

Jim Cornette had this firsthand account of the Tulsa match: "We were at the Fairgrounds in Tulsa instead of the normal venue, the Downtown Assembly Center. The AC was a little bigger in seating capacity, but the Coliseum had a huge floor area for rodeos. The standing room was oversold, so the entire floor was packed from ring to wall on every side. It was Bill Watts' hometown, so while every MSW crowd was rowdy, this was the most chaotic, and inebriated, I had ever seen. I remember thinking at ringside that if we won the match, we would have never gotten out of there alive, and as it was, I promised myself if we made it back to the locker room without serious injury I was quitting the wrestling business and going home.

In the match, Watts and JYD bloodied and beat Bobby and Dennis, who were then whisked off to the

back by a dozen Tulsa Sheriff's Department deputies. One of the deputies had already been knocked out by a fan swinging a chair at Nikolai Volkoff earlier in the night, so they were having no fun either. Watts and Dog stripped me down, dressed me in a large pink dress, had their glory, and then I rolled out of the ring.

The show was over, so the worst that could happen to any fan who wanted a piece of me was to go to jail, and Lord knows they'd proven in Tulsa they didn't mind that. The cops surrounded me and off we went through the fans, but all of them were swinging or kicking to get at me. The farther we went, the fewer cops I had, because every time one of them would tackle a fan, we kept moving, and there were a LOT more fans than cops. Halfway back, I realized I was down to one deputy, who looked at me and screamed "RUN!!", then he was taken down by some cowboys.

Off I took as fast as I could, running through the crowd wearing black dress shoes, a pink dress, and swinging my racket in a circle in front of me, hitting anything that moved. About 25 feet from the entrance to the locker rooms, I broke into an open area and saw Jim Ross standing in front of Watts' Rolls Royce, which he had pulled in through the back doors to get it out of the thunderstorms outside. JR was standing in front of it both to urge me to home plate and also to protect the Rolls from the flying beer bottles and debris being hurled at me.

All that stuff hitting the Rolls sounded like rain

on a tin roof as I went past. I was black and blue, but still breathing, and when I got my paycheck, remembering I was only 4 months removed from the \$300 weeks in Memphis, I decided I'd stick with this wrestling thing a little while longer.

23 New Orleans MX over R&R MSTTC \$14,400
24 Little Rock

MX & B.Reed over R&R & T Taylor \$18,000

25 Shreveport TV

MX over Greg Koslov & Jason Walker

MX over John King & Tony Torres

R&R over MX TO WIN MSTTC

At this TV, JC laid down a challenge to any 3 teams to try to win the Mid South Tag Titles. Any teams EXCEPT the R&R Express. After beating two unknown teams, out came "Mr. Wrestling 1&2", who threw off their robes and masks to reveal the Rock & Roll Express, and beat the MX in a quick match to win the MSTTC.

26 Lake Charles Watts & Lee over MX \$31,000(REC)

27 Hughes Springs, Tx. 2pm

S. Lee & Duggan over MX \$5,300

Texarkana, Tx. 8pm R&R over MX Non Title

28 Alexandria Watts & Lee over MX \$41,500

This match drew a sellout 6,100 to the Rapides Parish Coliseum, setting a gate and people record.

29 Hammond, La. 2pm

Watts & Lee over MX \$14,000

The only disappointing gate of the tour, this city was only 30 miles from both Baton Rouge and New Orleans, so how many times could they pay to see the MX beaten up? JC was tarred and feathered here to make things different, as he had been put in a pink dress in Baton Rouge and fed a baby bottle and dressed in a diaper in the Superdome.

Lafayette, La. 8pm

Watts & Lee over MX \$21,500

The evening show was the third straight sellout in Lafayette, and a new gate record with prices raised again—JC was back in his pink dress for this one.

30 New Orleans R&R over MX MSTTC \$14,000

MAY 1984

1 Shreveport R&R over MX MSTTC

2 OFF

3 Biloxi R&R over MX MSTTC

4 Carthage, Tx. R&R over MX Non Title \$13,000

5 Monticello, Ark. 2pm R&R over MX Non Title

Little Rock 8pm Watts & Lee over MX \$71,000

The Fairgrounds Coliseum was a madhouse here, as 9,200 fans paid \$71,000, both records, with

estimates of 1,500-2,000 turned away, but no one is sure as they had to lock the front gates of the Fairgrounds complex 30 minutes before matchtime to avert a riot—the MX, late from the afternoon show due to car trouble, had a hard time getting onto the grounds. This match outdrew the Kenny Rogers concert the previous month by a comfortable margin.

6 Alexandria R&R over MX Non Title

7 Lake Charles R&R over MX MSTTC

8 Baton Rouge R&R over MX MSTTC \$18,000

9 Shreveport TV MX over Poffo & Mike Jackson

10 Beaumont, Tx. Watts & Lee over MX \$14,000

The Last Stampede finished up with the largest gate MSW had yet drawn in the Civic Center in Beaumont, Texas, which was a tough town to draw in—totals for the Stampede were 15 shows grossing \$807,000, and in the 5 weeks the Stampede was running, all Mid-South house shows combined grossed over \$1.2 million dollars, the biggest 5 weeks in Mid-South history and an amazing total for a territory of that size in 1984.

11 Houston, Tx. R&R over MX non title \$60,000

4 weeks after setting the all-time gate record, the return to Houston for the first R&R-MX match there drew \$60,000 with tickets \$15, \$12, \$8 & \$5, or about 8,000 fans

12 Nashville, Ark. R&R over MX Non Title

13 Okla. City 2pm R&R over MX Non Title \$40,000

Tulsa 8pm R&R over MX Non Title

14-15 OFF

16 Loranger, La. R&R over MX Non Title \$5,200

17 Pine Bluff, Ark. R&R over MX Non Title \$13,000

18 Lafayette, La. R&R over MX Non Title

19 Jackson, Miss. R&R over MX Non Title \$30,000

20 OFF

21 Thibodeaux, La. R&R over MX Non Title \$13,000

22 OFF

23 Shreveport TV MX over R&R TO WIN MSTTC

In a wild TV match, with JC putting up \$50,000 vs. the Tag Titles and a no DQ rule, the MX regained the MSTTC from the R&R in a chaotic finish with JC using ether to put Robert Gibson to sleep for the pin. After working MSW since Christmas with only 9 days off, the MX requested a weekend off to rest and recuperate.

24-27 OFF

28 New Orleans MX over J. Youngblood & M. Ragin

29 OFF

30 Jackson, Miss. MX over Youngblood & Ragin

31 Houma, La. MX over Poffo & Ragin

JUNE 1984

- 1 OFF
- 2 Beaumont, Tx. R&R over MX Non Title \$13,000
- 3 Alexandria MX over Youngblood & Ragin
- 4 Baton Rouge R&R & Duggan over MX & E. Ladd
- 5 Haynesville, La. Youngblood & Taylor over MX DQ
- 6 Shreveport TV

MX over Mike Jackson & Buddy West

MX NC Youngblood & Wrestling #2

- 7 Biloxi R&R & Duggan over MX & K. Krushev
- 8 Houston R&R & Duggan over MX & Ladd \$31,500
- 9 OFF
- 10 Hope, Ark. 2pm R&R over MX Non Title \$7,300
- Little Rock 8pm

MX over Mark Ragin & Dr. Death \$17,500

- 11 Thibodeaux, La.
- R&R & Taylor over MX & Butch Reed \$21,000
- 12 Shreveport MX over R&R DQ MSTTC
- 13 Greenwood, Miss.

R&R & Duggan over MX & Krushev

- 14 OFF

JC spent his off day going to Baton Rouge to post bond on an assault charge filed by a fan who jumped over a guard rail to swing at him but missed, and was pummeled by the police, at least one member of the MX, and booker Bill Dundee. JC never hit the fan, although he tried, but did catch one police officer in the head when drawing back his racket.

- 15 Lake Charles R&R & Duggan over MX & B. Reed
- 16 **NEW ORLEANS SUPERDOME**

MX over R&R MSTTC \$166,000

The second Superdome show of the year drew about 20,000 fans paying \$166,000—the MX-R&R Title match, one of the four featured matches, saw JC handcuffed to Jim Duggan, but JC “hired” Wendi Richter to distract Duggan, allowing him to be ethered and the MX to defeat the R&R.

- 17 Ok. City 2pm
- R&R & Duggan over MX & B. Reed \$35,000
- Tulsa 8pm R&R over MX Non Title \$30,000

- 18 OFF
- 19 Baton Rouge MX over R&R MSTTC \$21,000
- 20 Shreveport TV

At this TV taping, video of the Superdome was replayed and the MX continued their issue with Hacksaw Jim Duggan—after the taping, driving back to Alexandria, Eaton & Condrey were pulled over for speeding in Coushatta, La. As Dennis did not have his registration with him, the police took them to the courthouse, where the Sheriff was indignant that the

MX had used ether to win the Tag Title from the Rock & Roll. They impounded Dennis’ van, and left the MX sitting on the front steps until 2am when Cornette, driving separately, could come get them. It took Condrey two weeks to get his van back

- 21 Houma, La.
- R&R & Duggan over MX & Herc. Hernandez
- 22 Houston Tx. MX over R&R MSTTC

(JC cuffed to Dr. Death) \$64,500

- 23 Jackson, Miss. MX over Duggan & Taylor \$28,500
- 24 Alexandria 2pm

MX over Duggan & Taylor \$19,000

- Monroe, La. 8pm
- Duggan & TA over MX DQ \$20,000

- 25 New Orleans MX over Duggan & Taylor \$20,000
- 26 Shreveport MX over R&R MSTTC \$11,000
- 27 Lake Charles MX over R&R MSTTC \$14,000

- 28 Biloxi Eaton & Buddy Landell over R&R
- 29 Little Rock

R&R & Duggan over Eaton, Landell & Reed

- 30 Lafayette Eaton & Landell over R&R \$21,551
- (Another record gate in Lafayette—by \$51.00)

JULY 1984

- 1 Ok. City 2pm MX over R&R MSTTC \$75,000
- Tulsa 8pm

MX & Ladd over R&R & Duggan \$41,000

Another big day in Oklahoma-loaded lineups, including the MX-R&R match with JC in a cage above the ring in OKC saw the day gross almost \$120,000—tix in OKC were priced at \$15, 10, 8, 6 & 4.

- 2 Baton Rouge
- MX over R&R MSTTC JC in cage \$39,900

- 3 OFF
- 4 New Orleans
- JC & MX over R&R & Duggan \$29,000

- 5 Bogalusa, La. R&R & Duggan over MX & Ladd
- \$24,500 (4,000 fans)

- 6 Houston MX over R&R MSTTC (JC in cage)
- \$71,000 (9,000 fans)

This main event showdown drew the year’s best Houston gate after the Last Stampede, but the MX & R&R would best it in November

7 Hammond, La. MX over R&R MSTTC

CAGE MATCH LOSER LEAVE MSW \$25,000

The R&R lost this showdown and had to leave MSW for 60 days.

- 8 Alexandria 2pm MX over R&R MSTTC \$15,000
- Monroe 8pm MX over R&R MSTTC \$16,000

Once again, in a big territory with no internet, the R&R stay one more day after their Loser Leave

★ Wrestling Program ★



THE BEST OF TEXAS WRESTLING INC.

PAUL BOESCH Promoter & President
PETER BIRKHOLZ Asst. Promoter & Vice President

FRIDAY, JULY 6, 1984

HOUSTON TEXAS

PHONE 659 7793

**CORNETT WILL HANG TONIGHT!
ROCK 'N ROLL EXPRESS BATTLES MIDNIGHT EXPRESS!
DIBIASE RETURNS TO FACE MAGNUM T.A. FOR TITLE!
8 BIG EVENTS WITH 24 WRESTLERS!!!**



THE ROCK 'N ROLL EXPRESS

In the main event tonight the Rock 'N Roll Express faces The Midnight Express for the Mid-South Tag Team Titles and Boies. And their manager Jim Cornett will be in a cage over the ring until the winner is determined. Cornett: "It looks like we got you where you will feel at home and that's in a cage. And since you will be in a cage you won't be able to help your Midnight Express like you usually do. And after we win the titles back we just may leave you up there for a while! Because we all know that you are going to feel at home being in that cage!"



THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS MANAGED BY JIM CORNETT

"This is an insult to the Cornett name and to myself! I have called my mother and told her about all the things that Promoter Paul Boesch is doing to me and and The Midnight Express. After The Midnight Express deals with the Rock 'N Roll Express then my mother and I will take over Houston and then no one will be able to stop me or the Midnight Express! But you people from Texas are too stupid to realize that I am the greatest manager in the history of wrestling and you people of Houston will see that sooner than you think. The Mid-South Tag Team titles are mine and no one is going to take them away from me!" said Cornett.

**HOUSTON WRESTLING RETURNS TO COLISEUM FRI., JULY 20!
TICKETS ON SALE NOW INSIDE FRONT LOBBY!!! BUY YOUR TICKETS EARLY!!!
ANOTHER BLOCKBUSTING CARD BEING SIGNED!!! WATCH TV FOR DETAILS!!!**



MSW match

9 DeKalb, Tx. Duggan & Taylor over MX Non Title

10 Shreveport

Duggan, Taylor & Dr Death over MX & JC \$11,000

11 Eldorado, Ark. Duggan & Taylor over MX

12 Beaumont, Tx.

JC & MX over Duggan, Taylor & Doc

13 Lafayette TA & Taylor over MX Non Title \$17,800

14 Little Rock MX over R&R MSTTC

(JC hung in cage) \$40,000

On this night, a death threat was phoned into the arena, with the guy claiming he was going to shoot Ted DiBiase—a dozen extra Little Rock police officers showed up for security and DiBiase returned to the locker room unharmed, which meant that there could be a frustrated sniper in the crowd of 6,000, and JC was hung 20 feet over the ring in a cage in the main event—which the MX were going to screw the R&R over in. With the police watching the stands and JC holding his breath, nothing happened.

15 Oklahoma City 2pm

Duggan & Fantastics over JC & MX \$50,200

Tulsa 8pm

MX over Duggan & Kerry V. Erich DQ \$32,000

16 Jackson, Miss.

MX & JC over Duggan, Taylor & Doc \$32,000

17 Baton Rouge MX over Duggan & Taylor

18 Shreveport TV MX over ? & ?

19 Biloxi Duggan & Fants over MX & JC

20 Houston Duggan & Fants over MX & JC \$51,000

21 New Orleans PYT Express (Norvell Austin &

Koko Ware) over MX Non Title

Duggan over DiBiase \$47,000

22 Lafayette 2pm

Duggan & Taylor over MX DQ \$12,000

Houma, La. 8pm

Duggan & Fantastics over MX & JC \$8,300

23 Monroe, La. Duggan & Fantastics over MX & JC

24 Shreveport MX over PYT MSTTC

Hercules Hernandez over Duggan DQ

At this point, JC hired Hercules Hernandez to be his “bodyguard” against Duggan, and began managing Herc at select events.

25 Alexandria Duggan & Taylor over MX Non Title

26 Lake Charles Duggan & Fantastics over MX & JC

27 Loranger, La. Duggan & PYT over MX & JC

28 Little Rock Duggan & Fantastics over MX & JC

29 Ok. City 2pm Fantastics over MX Non Title

Duggan over Hercules—got 5:00 w/JC \$33,000

Tulsa 8pm Duggan & Fantastics over MX & JC

30 New Orleans

MX over Duggan & Kerry Von Erich DQ \$26,900

31 Baton Rouge Duggan & PYT over MX & JC

AUGUST 1984

1 Shreveport TV MX over ? & ?

2 Greenwood, Ms MX over PYT

Hercules over Duggan DQ

Gentlemen:

I know each of you is now a "Superstar" and
all the people already understand each boot completely
BUT: !!

In every Gimmick Boot - IT IS NECESSARY TO:

1. Explain the boot
2. Show the Gimmick: ie
the dog collar buckled to the throat & pulling on it
taped fists - the fists should be taped - Come dressed
as you are - dress that way - And so on.
You guys start taking the interviews for granted
and that is a MISTAKE!
3. You must remember
that your interviews many times are more
important than the TV boot. The people are very
interested in what you say.
4. Therefore -
remember events that happened in your last
boot in each town (when possible) and make
each interview very important.

Telephones are required for each wrestler -
if you do not have one - then make arrangements
with the office for a telephone contact. If
your situation changes - you are responsible
for the office getting the change - NO EXCEPTION

WFA

3 Houston Hercules over Duggan (MX OFF) \$51,000
 4 Beaumont Tx. Fants over MX Non-Title \$18,000
 5 Lake Charles MX over PYT MSTTC
 6 New Orleans Fants over MX Non-Title
 7 Pine Bluff, Ark. MX over PYT
 8 Monroe, La. MX over PYT MSTTC
 9 Jackson, Miss. MX over PYT MSTTC
 Hercules over Duggan \$21,000
 10 Alexandria MX over PYT MSTTC
 11 Little Rock MX over PYT MSTTC
 12 Ok. City 2pm MX over PYT MSTTC
 Herc & Reed over Duggan & Taylor \$44,000
 Tulsa 8pm MX over PYT MSTTC
 Herc & Ladd over Duggan & Taylor \$24,500
 13 Lafayette MX over PYT \$10,500
 14 Baton Rouge MX over PYT MSTTC \$16,000
 15 Shreveport TV MX over ? & ?
 16 Paradis, La. MX over PYT \$12,500 (SO)
 17 Houston Duggan, Taylor & Sonny King over
 Herc, Ladd & Reed (MX OFF) \$42,000
 18 Lake Charles Fants over MX Non Title
 Hercules over Duggan
 19 Hope, Ark. MX drew Fants 20:00
 Duggan over Herc DQ \$14,000
 20 Monroe, La. Fants over MX Non Title
 21 Shreveport Herc over Sonny King (MX OFF)
 22 Beaumont, Tx. MX over Duggan & Magnum TA
 23 Alexandria (MX OFF)

Duggan, Taylor & King over Reed, Doc & Herc

24 NEW ORLEANS SUPERDOME

Dusty Rhodes & King over MX Non Title,

Duggan over Herc Coal Miner's Glove

(The third Dome show of the year saw about 18,000 fans pay \$165,000 with tix priced at \$50,25,20,10,8 & 5—the semi-final underneath a Ric Flair NWA Title defense vs. Kerry Von Erich saw Duggan get his revenge on Hercules—the MX were scheduled vs. Dusty and JYD in a MSTTC defense, but JYD had left for WWF, so Sonny King subbed and it was made a non-title match)

25 Little Rock Fants over MX Non Title
 Dusty, Duggan & Taylor over Herc, Ladd & Reed
 \$27,000

26 Oklahoma City 2pm

Dusty & King over MX Non Title

Duggan over Herc Coal Miner's Glove \$107,000

Tulsa 8pm Fants over MX Non Title

Herc & Reed over Dusty & Duggan \$53,000

The biggest single day ever in Oklahoma—
 with Flair vs. Kerry and these lineups both loaded,

record gates in both cities were set with tix at \$25, 15, 10,8 & 6--total gross was \$160,000, but the number of paid fans was still short of the Last Stampede events due to the difference in ticket prices.

27 Jackson, Miss. (MX OFF)

Duggan, Taylor & King over Herc, Reed & Doc

28 Baton Rouge Fants over MX Non Title

Duggan, Taylor & King over Herc, Reed & Doc

29 Shreveport TV MX over ? & ?

30 Loranger, La. MX over Fantastics DQ MSTTC

Duggan over Hercules Coal Miner's Glove

31 Houston Fants over MX Non Title

Duggan over Herc Coal Miner's Glove

SEPTEMBER 1984

1 Monroe (MX OFF)

Duggan over Hercules Coal Miner Glove

2 Alexandria 2pm Fants over MX Non Title

Duggan over Herc Coal Miner's Glove

Houma, La. 8pm Duggan & TA over MX DQ

Hercules over Sonny King

3 New Orleans Fants over MX DQ MSTTC

Hercules over Duggan \$25,000

A bad night for JC--trying to rebuild New Orleans after JYD left the area, a match was booked between Hercules and Duggan with JC's hair at stake and Dr. Death the referee--JC paid off Doc and he fast counted Duggan so Herc won, but the babyfaces rushed the ring and trapped JC, and shaved his head—sort of. JC had thick hair in his youth, and it was soaked with sweat, and the clippers bogged down. The amateur barbers broke two pair of small trainer's scissors, and finally half-ass finished the job with shaving cream and a Bic disposable razor. JYD was irreplaceable in New Orleans, and the show only drew 4,000 paying about \$25,000)

4 Shreveport Fants over MX DQ MSTTC

Duggan over Herc Coal Miner's Glove

5 Beaumont, Tx. Fants over MX DQ MSTTC

Duggan, King & J. Lothario over Herc, Ladd & Reed

6 Jackson, Miss. Fants over MX DQ MSTTC

Duggan over Herc Coal Miner's Glove

7 Tulsa, Ok. Duggan over Herc Coal Miner's Glove

Fants over MX DQ MSTTC

JC's firsthand account of the worst riot the

MX ever started: "I threw my belt in the ring to Bobby & Dennis, who clotheslined Bobby Fulton with it for the DQ--suddenly a fan hopped the rail and charged me, so I rolled into the ring. He started to follow, but Dennis caught him coming through the ropes with a boot to the face and busted him wide open. We

rolled out of the ring and I was immediately blinded with a beer in the face, so I was swinging blind at everybody charging us. The cops were outmanned as it seemed dozens of people were swinging at us by the time we were halfway down the aisle. I don't know how many people Bobby and Dennis nailed, but they weren't doing half as much damage as the cops were, since they had pulled out their nightsticks because people were attacking THEM to get through to us.

We came bruised and battered through the archway to the locker rooms, while the cops were still holding the people off from following us, and lo and behold, the guy who started the whole thing was laying in a heap on the floor where the cop who drug him out had left him before rejoining the fray. I went over and football kicked the bastard for almost getting us killed, and Bobby then threw one, when the old door guard in the back told us to leave him alone, and as he backed us up, just like a referee distraction spot, he turned his back to Dennis, who still had my belt wrapped around his fist. Dennis picked the guy up by the hair and blasted him with a right, busting the OTHER side of his face open.

We looked down the hall and the cops had stacked at least 5 bloody fans up in a pile, with some more in cuffs. At least half a dozen went to jail and who knows how many more had committed arrestable

offenses and gotten away in the melee. The next show, the Tulsa Police Internal Affairs people were there to take our statements because of the complaints of police brutality, but no charges ever came to pass because all testimony was that the cops were trying to save our lives.

Finally it was resolved that since there had been at least 6 instances of fan violence during MX matches in Tulsa during 1984 alone, the City Police found an obscure statute that prevented them from working security at wrestling matches, and MSW began using the Sheriff's Department at the Assembly Center as well as out at the Fairgrounds events. Just another day at work for the Midnight Express."

8 Ok. City Fants over MX DQ MSTTC
Duggan, Taylor & King over Here, Doc & Ladd

\$47,000

9 Houston Fants over MX DQ MSTTC
Duggan over Here--JC's Hair at Stake \$62,000

Somehow, Dundee booked JC to lose his hair TWICE in one week, so in this match, JC's "Cousin Percy", Memphis jobber Jim Jamison was brought in to have his hair cut instead--JC would have rather waited and done it here, since this event drew 8,500 fans paying \$62,000, and JC's payoff was nearly double what his REAL head shaving earned him.

10 Lake Charles Fants over MX DQ MSTTC



Duggan over Hercules Coal Miners Glove
 11 Baton Rouge Fants over MX DQ MSTTC
 Duggan over Hercules Coal Miners Glove
 12 Shreveport TV MX over Ric McCord & ?
 13 Biloxi, Miss. Fants over MX Non Title
 Duggan over Eaton Coal Miners Glove
 14 Little Rock Fants over MX DQ MSTTC
 Duggan over Herc Coal Miners Glove
 15 Crowley, La. Herc over King (MX OFF) \$17,200
 16 Natchitoches, La. 2pm
 Fants & Duggan over MX & Herc DQ \$8,600
 Monroe 8pm Fants over MX DQ MSTTC
 Duggan, Taylor & King over Herc, Doc & Ladd
 \$11,200
 17 New Orleans MX over Fants MSTTC
 Herc & Dr Death over Duggan & Taylor \$17,000
 18 Shreveport MX over Fants MSTTC
 19 Greenville, Miss. Fants over MX DQ Non Title
 20 Jackson, Miss. MX over Fants MSTTC
 21 Alexandria Fants over MX DQ MSTTC
 22 Hammond, La.
 Fants & Duggan over MX & Herc DQ \$17,000
 23 Oklahoma City 2pm
 MX over Fantastics MSTTC \$37,000
 Tulsa 8pm MX over Fants MSTTC
 Herc, Doc & Reed over Duggan, Taylor & TA
 \$32,000
 24 Pine Bluff, Ark. Fants over MX DQ MSTTC
 25 Baton Rouge MX over Fants MSTTC \$10,500
 26 Shreveport TV MX over ? & ?
 27 Greenwood, Miss. MX over Fants MSTTC
 28 Houston MX over Fants MSTTC \$52,000
 29 Beaumont, Tx. MX over Fants MSTTC
 Duggan over Herc CM Glove \$14,900
 30 Lafayette 2pm
 MX over Fantastics MSTTC
 Duggan over Herc CM Glove \$9,000
 Thibodeaux, La. 8pm
 MX over Fants MSTTC
 Duggan over Hercules CM Glove \$14,000

OCTOBER 1984

1 New Orleans Hercules over King
 R&R OVER MX TO WIN MSTTC \$21,000
 The R&R's leave-MSW stipulation was up,
 and they returned to Mid-South to regain the belts
 their first night back.
 2 Shreveport R&R over MX Non Title
 3 Alexandria MX over Fantastics
 Duggan over Hercules
 4 Crossett, Ark. MX over Fantastics

5 Texarkana, Tx. R&R over MX Non Title
 6 Biloxi, Miss. MX over Fantastics \$18,000
 7 Oklahoma City 2pm
 R&R over MX MSTTC
 Duggan over Herc \$33,000
 Tulsa 8pm R&R over MX MSTTC \$25,000
 8 Lake Charles MX over Fantastics \$13,000
 9 Houma, La. Duggan & TA over Herc & Doc
 After this match, being attacked by drunken
 Cajuns, JC personal witnessed Hercules Hernandez
 and Steve "Dr. Death" Williams beat up 10 men with
 no assistance whatsoever.
 10 Shreveport TV MX over ? & ?
 11 Beaumont, Tx. MX over Fants CAGE \$8,700
 12 Houston Fants over MX \$33,000
 13 Baton Rouge R&R over MX MSTTC
 Duggan over Hercules
 14 Pine Bluff 2pm MX over Fantastics CAGE
 Monroe, La. 8pm R&R over MX MSTTC
 Duggan over Hercules \$10,000
 15 New Orleans Duggan & TA over MX
 16 Shreveport MX over Fantastics

At this point, the MX and JC had been work-
 ing hard since July—the MX had only 7 days off, and
 JC NO days off, since July 3, or a stretch of 103 days
 JC began suffering dizzy spells and weakness, went to
 the doctor, and was told his immune system was shut-
 ting down and his abdominal pain was from his
 organs swelling from a form of mononucleosis, and
 was ordered to bedrest for 2-4 weeks. JC took the fol-
 lowing 6 days off, and so has no results, but the MX
 wrestled the R&R in all the following towns:

17 Lafayette MX vs. R&R
 18 Loranger, La. MX vs. R&R
 19 Hamburg, Ark. MX vs. R&R
 20 Little Rock MX vs. R&R
 21 Oklahoma City 2pm MX vs. R&R
 Tulsa 8pm MX vs. R&R
 22 Lake Charles MX vs. R&R
 23 OFF
 24 Shreveport TV

MX challenged R&R to "any type of match
 they want" for the MSTTC—R&R demonstrated a
 straightjacket they'd like to place JC in to keep him
 from interfering, and the MX attacked them while
 Gibson was helpless, strapped in the jacket.

25 Biloxi R&R over MX MSTTC
 26 Houston
 MX over Brickhouse Brown & Master G \$32,000
 27 Jackson, Miss. R&R over MX MSTTC

Duggan over Hercules \$31,000
 28 Alexandria R&R over MX MSTTC \$15,000
 29 N Orleans MX over B.House & J. Mantell \$17,000
 30 Shreveport MX over Brickhouse & Mantell
 31 Lafayette Hercules over Magnum TA (MX OFF)

NOVEMBER 1984

1 Biloxi MX over R&R, Reed & Landell, &
 Brickhouse & Master G in 4 team elimination
 2 Ft. Polk, La. R&R & Duggan over MX & Herc
 3-4 OFF
 5 Princeton, Ark. MX over Dundee & Mantell \$8,000
 6 Baton Rouge
 MX over Shawn Michaels & Brickhouse \$11,000
 7 Shreveport TV MX over Brickhouse & Wells

(Also at this taping, the upcoming series of scaffold matches with the R&R Express was announced.)

8 Beaumont, Tx. R&R over MX Non Title
 9 OFF
 10 New Orleans
 MX over Brickhouse & Wells \$21,000
 11 Monroe MX over Dundee & Brickhouse
 12 OFF
 13 Shreveport R&R over MX MSTTC
 SCAFFOLD MATCH \$15,400

The first-ever tag team scaffold match—the match, which was invented by Jerry Jarrett, debuted on August 15, 1971 in Louisville, Kentucky, when Jarrett defeated Don Greene in the ultimate match to prevent outside interference—the match was wrestled on a 2 foot wide, 20 foot long scaffold 15 feet above the ring, with the first man to be knocked off the loser. The match was held every few years in the Memphis area and never outside it until Dundee brought the concept to MSW. The scaffold was widened to 4 feet for the tag match, and this was the ultimate blowoff to the MX-R&R's year long feud. JC put up \$25,000 vs. the MSTTC in each match, and it was designed to be the MX's farewell match in each Mid-South city, to return the favor for the R&R losing the "Leave MSW" stip back in July. Due to JC's well-known fear of heights, it was the one match in which he could not interfere

14-15 OFF
 16 Little Rock
 MX over Shawn Michaels & Tony Falk \$23,800
 17 Baton Rouge MX over Michaels & Falk \$18,000
 18 Oklahoma City 2pm
 MX over Brickhouse & Wells \$54,000
 Tulsa 8pm Taylor & TA over MX DQ

19 Beaumont, Tx. MX over Brickhouse & Wells
 20 Loranger, La. MX over Taylor & Brickhouse
 21 OFF

22 NEW ORLEANS SUPERDOME

R&R over MX MSTTC SCAFFOLD \$104,000

The fourth and final Dome show of 1984.. New Orleans had struggled due to the loss of it's all-time biggest draw, Junkyard Dog, who had left in August to go to the WWF. It rebounded somewhat, but still below hopes, for this main event blowoff of the R&R-MX series, with Ernie Ladd in one of his final wrestling appearances challenging Magnum TA for the North American Title as the semi-final, and a rather weak undercard.

This Thanksgiving Day event drew about 14,000 paying \$104,000, bringing the total of the four 1984 Dome shows to about 75,000 fans paying \$611,000, in the same city where there had been 25 other live events at either the Downtown Municipal Auditorium or the UNO Lakefront Arena, those events drawing anywhere from \$14,000 to \$47,000 each. It can be safely estimated, without the exact figures available, that New Orleans in 1984 drew, including Dome events, over 160,000 fans paying over \$1.2 million dollars for pro wrestling in the city.

23 Houston, Tx.
 R&R over MX MSTTC SCAFFOLD \$89,800
 Houston, trying not to be outdone, drew a legitimate sellout of 11,000+ fans paying only \$15,000 less than the Superdome crowd had the night before, and if the fire marshall had not been in attendance, this could have rivaled the Last Stampede record as fans were turned away. Houston's year, headlined by the three record-setting gates by the Midnight Express and the MX in a number of additional main events, settled in at approximately 175,000 fans paying \$1,150,000 for 24 events, of which the MX were on all but 3.

24 Alexandria MX DCOR R&R MSTTC
 (JC hung in straight-jacket)
 25 Lafayette 2pm MX over Michaels & Falk
 Houma, La. 8pm R&R over MX
 (JC in straight-jacket) \$11,300(SO)
 26 Monroe R&R over MX MSTTC SCAFFOLD
 27 OFF
 28 Jackson, Miss.

R&R over MX MSTTC SCAFFOLD \$30,000
 29 Biloxi, Miss.
 R&R over MX MSTTC SCAFFOLD \$20,000
 30 Lake Charles MX over Michaels & Falk \$27,000

December 1984



1 Little Rock R&R over MX DQ
(JC hung in straight-jacket) \$28,000

2 Oklahoma City 2pm
R&R over MX MSTTC SCAFFOLD \$61,000
Tulsa 8pm R&R over MX MSTTC
SCAFFOLD MATCH \$64,000

The house in Oklahoma City for the scaffold match was disappointing--held at the Fairgrounds Coliseum rather than the Myriad due to scheduling reasons it drew only 8000+ fans paying \$61,000 at ticket prices of \$15, 10, 8, 6 & 4. But Tulsa partially made up for it, selling out the Assembly Center with around 8,500 paying \$64,000 at prices of \$15, 12, 10, 8 & 5, breaking the record set 8/26/04 by Flair vs. Kerry that broke the record set 4/22/84 by the Last Stampede. Total gross for the day--16,500+ paying \$125,000 to see the final conflict between the Expresses.

It can safely be said that the 1984 totals for pro wrestling in Oklahoma will never be broken, by the WWE or anyone--Oklahoma City drew more than 180,000 paid admissions grossing over \$1,250,000--the MX set a record gate vs. Wrestling 2 and Magnum TA, a people record vs. the same team, broke their own gate record vs. Watts and Stagger Lee, and Flair vs. Kerry broke THAT gate record as well with the MX underneath vs. Dusty Rhodes and Sonny King

(advertised as JYD)

The MX were on 21 of the 24 Oklahoma City events. In Tulsa, 21 events grossed in excess of \$700,000, with approximately 100,000 paid admissions. The MX set a gate record vs. 2 and TA, broke that record with the Last Stampede, Flair vs. Kerry broke that record, and the scaffold match vs. the R&R shattered THAT record by over \$10,000. The MX were on 18 of the 21 Tulsa events that year.)

3 Fort Worth, Tx. TV

MX over Buck Zumhofe & John Tatum
(World Class Championship Wrestling (WCCW) Debut)

4 Baton Rouge R&R over MX MSTTC
SCAFFOLD MATCH \$26,000

5 OFF

6 Lake Charles R&R over MX MSTTC
SCAFFOLD MATCH \$25,000

7 Dallas, Tx. (WCCW) MX over Fantastics
8 OFF

9 Alexandria R&R over MX MSTTC
SCAFFOLD MATCH \$22,000

10 OFF

11 OFF

12 Beaumont, Tx. R&R over MX MSTTC
SCAFFOLD MATCH

13 OFF

14 Greenville, Miss.	R&R over MX MSTIC	
	SCAFFOLD MATCH	\$12,000
15 Little Rock	R&R over MX MSTTC	
	SCAFFOLD MATCH	\$32,000
16 Lafayette	R&R over MX MSTTC	
	SCAFFOLD MATCH	\$15,500
17 Fort Worth TV (WCCW)		
	MX over Tommy Rogers & Chic Donovan	

TORN BETWEEN TWO BOOKERS THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS IN WORLD CLASS WRESTLING

In late October 1984, the Express were told that they would be working the series of Scaffold matches with the Rock & Roll Express as the finish to their program and their one-year run in Mid South Wrestling. Thus, the Express had a big decision to make--where would they go after MSW? Just one year before, Eaton and Condrey's choices were limited, and Cornette's options for promotions to work for were nil. Now, after their record-setting run, they all 3 had the option of just about any promotion in the country.

After working on the same events with Ric Flair, he had strongly suggested they come to the Charlotte area for Jim Crockett Promotions, the biggest NWA territory in the country. As well, after working against Dusty Rhodes, Crockett's booker, in the Superdome, he had told them that they were welcome anytime their MSW commitments were finished. With Crockett controlling wrestling on the TBS Superstation, a huge syndicated TV network, and a large territory with big money potential, the Express decided that this was their best bet, and JC called Jim Crockett to work out arrangements to start at the first of 1985.

A wrench was thrown into those plans in late November when Bill Dundee told them they had been booked for dates in World Class Wrestling, the Dallas-based office run by Fritz Von Erich. Dundee urged them to make the WCCW dates before they made any decisions, as Watts had developed a working relationship with the Dallas office, and the Freebirds were just finishing a big-money run there, so they were in need of a top heel team. The Express agreed to go and check it out, and made the above-listed dates in early December.

As background, the Dallas office had never been a big-money territory until the early '80's. Fritz Von Erich, a national star, had settled there in the '60's, become Texas' wrestling hero and later owner

of the promotion. Despite drawing some huge houses himself over the years, particularly a Texas Stadium crowd of 26,339 fan on June 24, 1972 for an NWA title match with Dory Funk Jr. No one else besides Von Erich, or later his teenage sons Kevin, David and Kerry, ever made really big money there.

The Freebirds, Michael Hayes, Terry Gordy, and Buddy Roberts, changed all that. Brought in by booker Gary Hart, the Freebirds were not only the first young, cool heels in Dallas, they were the first ones to be able to present a serious challenge, in the fan's eyes, to the Von Erich boys. Beginning with a masterpiece of an angle in Kerry's NWA Title cage match with Ric Flair Christmas night 1982 in Dallas' Reunion Arena, the company had been on fire, drawing huge houses in all the big arenas in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, and to a lesser extent the rest of the area.

By late 1984, however, the fire was beginning to burn out. The death of David Von Erich in Japan that Spring had led to the biggest gate to that point in wrestling history, over 40,000 paying over \$400,000 at Texas Stadium to see Kerry win the World Title from Flair in David's memory. But the loss of the oldest Von Erich brother hurt, and after two years of Von Erich--Freebird matches, the fans were ready for something different.

When the Express made their debut in Fort Worth, according to Cornette, they saw problems ahead. "We were nervous about what we saw", Cornette recalled. "The booker, Ken Mantell, was more of a babysitter to the Von Erichs than a commanding leader. Mantell had been in the business for years, but certainly didn't have the track record of a Watts, a Dusty, or Dundee. 1982-84's run was the only big-money run he had booked, and to us, that was more due to the dynamic of the Birds and Von Erichs. WCCW had a great, state of the art syndicated TV from the Dallas Sportatorium, but compared to TBS and Crockett's syndication, the exposure was smaller. The Dallas talent pool was pretty tiny compared to the Charlotte office's led by Flair and Dusty. It looked to us like the Dallas office, overall, was a small regional territory that had lucked into a superhot program and a good TV show, and didn't really know how to follow up on it. It took a couple of years for this to become clear, but in hindsight, we were right. So at our last date in Fort Worth, we told them we had decided to go to Charlotte."

With Cornette at home in Louisville for the

Christmas holidays, he received a call from Dundee, telling him that Watts really wanted them to go to Dallas, since it was the territory next door to Mid-South, they wanted to keep up the talent trade agreement, and that the Express would be brought back over for major market MSW shows like the Superdome events to augment their income.

"We weren't real happy", Cornette explained, "but mostly out of loyalty to Bill Watts for what he had done for us, we said OK. We had the Fantastics in Dallas to have great matches with, and the Von Erichs to make money with, plus shorter trips and the big Mid-South shows to help our paychecks. So I called Crockett and explained, and he was good enough to leave an offer open for whenever we wanted to make the move." With the drama hopefully settled, the MX were set to make their real debut in WCCW, the Christmas night Star Wars event in Reunion Arena.

December 1984

25 Dallas REUNION ARENA

Fantastics over MX \$185,000(SO)

The MX's first big show was a mixed bag--the event drew a sellout 20,000 fans paying \$185,000, and their match with Fulton & Rogers was very good, but they did a job their first night in, which saw them wondering about the booking. They would later learn that Dallas was neither a heat territory like Mid-South, nor did they do much more than elementary angles and simple finishes. Still, there were no real frowns until they got their paychecks and received \$800 each on this huge gate.

26-30 OFF

31 Fort Worth Eaton drew Tommy Rogers 15:00
Fulton over Condrey \$33,000

The MX & Fants were already split into singles matches—they later learned this was common in Dallas because of the small talent roster.

JANUARY 1985

1-2 OFF

3 Crystal City, Tx.

T. Rogers & Mike Von Erich over MX DQ

4 Dallas Eaton over Iceman Parsons
Condrey drew T. Rogers 20:00

5 Seguin, Tx. Eaton over Fulton
Fantastics over MX \$5,700

The MX's introduction to the "Captain's match"--spot show cards were small, usually four matches, with a tag team main event, and the two "Captains" also wrestling a singles match on the same card for a small bonus (Condrey actually got an extra

\$13 one night)--the Fants and MX usually alternated nights on these to make it fair

6-7 OFF

8 Austin, Tx. Fantastics over MX \$8,000

9 OFF

10 San Antonio, Tx.

MX over Rock & Roll Express \$22,000

11 Dallas MX over Fants TO WIN ATTC \$23,000

The Sportatorium usually ran every Friday night--one week was a house show only, the next week World Class TV taping--this was a TV where the MX won the American Tag Team Title. The Dallas crowd was rowdy anyway, and the MX continued their heat- getting ways.

JC recalls, "If security thought there would be trouble going back up the aisle to the locker rooms, they would take you out the side emergency exit about 20 feet from the ring, and walk you up through the parking lot to the office entrance."

"Starting with this night, I don't think we ever used the aisle we came down any time we worked the Sportatorium. It was cold in the Winter, but better than fighting fans going uphill."

12 Wylie, Tx. Eaton over Rogers
Fants over MX Non Title \$8,000

13 Lubbock, Tx. Fants over MX Non Title

14 Fort Worth TV

MX over Terry Taylor & Brad Armstrong \$14,000

Another "great" feature of WCCW was the Fort Worth TV--taped every Monday in the Will Rogers Coliseum, it was a 2 hour show that aired on KTVT-11 every Saturday night. Ratings were huge, but with only 4 or 5 matches per show, many were 2/3 fall, long matches in a cold arena that usually didn't draw well. JC, however, did enjoy the interview segments, which were open-ended affairs to plug all the Metroplex live events, and it was not unusual for JC's to go 6 or 7 minutes, getting him a lot of experience and aiding in the MX getting heat with the fans.

15 OFF

16 Shreveport TV

Chavo & Hector Guerrero over R&R

JC was brought back to Mid-South TV to manage the Guerreros as they began a program with the R&R--The MX, in Dallas, were off as Wednesdays seldom ran there due to "church night"

17 Grand Prairie, Tx.

Condrey drew Fulton 20:00 \$16,750

Even more frustrating, on some nights when 2 shows ran, the tag teams would be split up into singles

matches, one in each town. Going forward, the results on these events will be for the one JC was booked on

18 Dallas Fants over MX DQ ATTC \$19,700

19 Harlingen, Tx. Fants over MX Non Title

20 San Antonio Fants over MX DQ ATTC \$12,000

21 New Orleans (MSW) R&R over MX

22 Abilene, Tx. Fants over MX Non Title

23-24 OFF

25 Dallas TV MX over J. Lothario & Johnny Mantell

26 Longview, Tx. Eaton over Fulton

Fants over MX Non Title \$14,000

27 Amarillo, Tx. Fants over MX Non Title

28 Fort Worth

MX drew Fantastics 2/3 falls 30:00 \$59,000

Special Star Wars event in Tarrant County Convention Center drew about 7000 fans paying \$59,000--the MX's payoff for a 30:00 Tag Title match on a house that large was \$350 each!

29 OFF

30 Alice, Texas Rogers over Condrey

Fants over MX Non Title \$6,500

31 Yokum, Tx. Eaton over Fulton

Fants over MX Non Title

FEBRUARY 1985

1-2 OFF

3 Corpus Christi, Tx. MX DDQ Fants Non Title

4 Fort Worth TV Fulton over Eaton

Condrey over Johnny Mantell 2/3 falls \$8,800

5 Monroe, La. (MSW) R&R over MX,

Fants & Guerreros 4 team elimination

6 Alexandria (MSW)

R&R over MX--R&R got 5:00 w/JC \$18,700

7 Beaumont (MSW)

R&R over MX--R&R got 5:00 w/JC \$12,000

8 Dallas TV

Mike Von Erich & Brian Adias over MX \$19,700

A famous conversation between MX and Ken Mantell--when the MX asked why, since they had just won the tag title and started a program for it with the Fants, were they losing a non- title match on TV to two guys that weren't even a regular team, Mantell responded, "It's OK, the Fantastics aren't winning tonight either!"

9 Arlington, Tx. Bobby Fulton over Eaton

Fants over MX Non Title \$16,000

10 Oklahoma City 2pm (MSW)

MX over Fants, R&R & Guerreros \$56,000

Tulsa 8pm (MSW)

MX over Fants, R&R & Guerreros \$41,000

Back in Mid-South, MX were winning match-

es in the territory they weren't even working full time, and made as much money in one day as many of their WEEKLY WCCW checks

11 Fort Worth TV

Kevin, Kerry & Mike Von Erich over MX & Rip Oliver DQ

One of only two 6 man tags the MX had with the Von Erichs in their 6 months in WCCW.

12 Temple, Tx. Eaton over Fulton

Fants over MX Non Title

13-14 OFF

15 Dallas Fants over MX DQ ATTC \$33,000

16 Henderson, Tx. Condrey over Rogers

Fants over MX Non Title

17 Amarillo 2pm Rogers over Eaton

Fulton over Condrey \$8,600

Lubbock 8pm Rogers over Condrey

Fulton over Eaton \$16,000

18 Fort Worth TV Condrey over Mark Regan

19 OFF

20 Lawton, Ok. Eaton over Fulton

Fants over MX Non Title

21 Clifton, Tx. Fulton over Condrey

22 Dallas TV Eaton over Mark Regan

MX over Adias & J. Mantell,

Kerry Von Erich over Rip Oliver w/JC \$22,000

At this point, JC also began managing Rip Oliver, who had just come in a few weeks earlier from the Portland territory--the WCCW fans were beginning to see JC sometimes 3 or 4 times per night, not conducive to longevity in a small territory.

23 Saginaw, Tx. Fulton over Condrey

24 Ok. City 2pm (MSW)

R&R over MX to get 5:00 w/JC

Tulsa 8pm (MSW)

R&R over MX to get 5:00 w/JC \$23,000

25 Fort Worth TV

Fants & R&R over MX, Rip & Kelly Kiniski

26 Austin, Tx. Condrey drew Fulton 20:00

27 Corpus Christi MX over Fants ATTC

28 Red Oak, Tx. Eaton over Fulton

Fants over MX Non Title \$9,100

MARCH 1985

1 Dallas Fants over MX Non Title \$15,000

2 Elkhart, Tx. Fulton over Eaton

3 El Paso, Tx. Fants over MX DQ ATTC \$29,600

4 Fort Worth TV Condrey drew Adias 2/3 falls 30:00.

Rip Oliver over Mike Von Erich \$14,200

5 Laredo, Tx. Fulton over Eaton

Fants over MX Non Title \$3,300
 6 Seguin, Tx. Condrey over Rogers
 Fants over MX Non Title
 8 weeks after this small city ran in January, WCCW returned with almost exactly the same card, so the MX switched up the Captain's match--it didn't draw this time either.

7 Miniola, Tx. Fulton over Eaton
 8 Dallas TV Herc. over Rip Oliver COR
 Fants over MX DQ ATTC \$27,000

For no tremendously compelling reason, after the MX were DQ'ed for JC's interference, the American Tag Team Championship belts were held up, with neither team champions pending a rematch. Since winning the belts on January 11, the MX had defended the Title only 6 times, losing by DQ 5 and winning 1.

9 Haltom City, Tx. Fulton over Eaton
 Fants over MX \$10,800
 10 Amarillo 2pm Rogers over Condrey
 Fants over MX DQ \$7,900
 Lubbock 8pm Fulton over Eaton
 Fants over MX DQ \$14,000
 11 Fort Worth TV Fulton over Condrey
 Rip drew Skip Young 15:00 TV Title,
 MX & Rip over Fants & Kerry V Erich \$16,700
 12 Wynnewood, Ok. Eaton over Fulton
 Fants over MX

13 OFF
 14 Justin, Tx. Fulton over Condrey
 Even in singles matches and losing, the MX still got heat--a fan tackled JC while JC was trying to do a finish where he screwed up and caused Condrey to lose, and while Fulton was pinning Dennis the crowd was watching JC knock the fan unconscious with one sweet racket shot to the forehead.
 15 Dallas Mike Von Erich over Rip Oliver DQ
 MX over R&R Express
 16 Cleburne, Tx. Condrey over Fulton
 Fants over MX \$9,100

17 Carrizo Springs, Tx. 2pm Fulton over Eaton
 Fulton & Robert Gibson over MX
 The low point in the MX's careers so far--this event was in a small town just across the Mexican border, held in a tin shed in a field of mud with a bed-sheet draped on the front that said "Wrestling today", and attended by 80 to 100 non-English speaking fans sitting in lawn chairs. The dressing rooms were in a motel 4 miles down the road. As Rogers was out with a minor injury, Fulton wrestled 4 matches this day on

both shows
 San Antonio 8pm Fulton over Condrey
 Fulton NC Eaton \$20,000
 18 Fort Worth TV Eaton over Adias 2/3 falls
 Rip Oliver over Skip Young TV Title \$36,200
 19 OFF
 20 Corpus Christi Adias over Eaton
 21 Midlothian, Tx. Condrey over Fulton
 Fulton & J. Mantell over MX
 22 Dallas TV
 Kerry V Erich & Adias over Eaton & Kiniski \$18,700
 23 Quinlan, Tx. Eaton over Fulton
 Fulton & Mantell over MX \$8,000
 24 Devine, Tx. 2pm Fulton over Condrey
 Fulton & Adias over MX
 Austin, Tx. 8pm Fulton over Eaton
 Fulton & Adias over MX
 25 Fort Worth TV
 MX NC Fulton & Kevin Von Erich
 Also at this TV, Rip Oliver attacked and injured Mike Von Erich, getting Rip suspended so he could get back to Portland and get the Hell out of this nuthouse.
 26 San Angelo, Tx. Condrey over Fulton
 Fulton & Mantell over MX
 27 OFF
 28 Olney, Tx. Rogers over Eaton
 (Rogers returns from injury)
 29 Dallas MX drew Mike V Erich & Young 20:00
 30 Corsicana, Tx. Eaton over Rogers
 Fants over MX \$9,500
 31 San Antonio
 MX DDQ Fants ATTC Belts Held Up \$10,300
 The almost-forgotten American Tag Team Championship belts, still held up, were on the line here and still held up after the Double DQ--this event, held on Palm Sunday in a predominantly Catholic city, drew an anemic 1300 fans paying \$10,300.

APRIL 1985

1 Fort Worth TV Scott Casey over Condrey \$13,000
 2 Wichita Falls, Tx. Condrey over Fulton
 Fantastics over MX \$4,200
 3 Lawton, Ok. Condrey drew Fulton 15:00
 Eaton over Mike Von Erich
 Fants, Mike & Kerry VE over MX &
 Gino Hernandez & Chris Adams \$5,600
 4 Italy, Tx. Eaton over Rogers
 Fants over MX
 5 Dallas TV

MX NC Fants ATTC Belts Held Up \$17,000
 Stretching credulity, in another rematch for the held-up belts, after the first ref was knocked out and JC interfered, a second ref came down and called the match a no contest--the Title remained held up.

6 Grand Prairie, Tx. Condrey over Fulton
 Fants over MX

7 Houston (MSW)
 R&R over MX, Freebirds, Dirty White Boys \$75,000

Returning to Houston for Mid-South, this was the first-ever meeting of the MX and the Freebirds. In this 4 team elimination match, the Birds were out first by countout, the R&R then eliminated the DWBoys, then the Expresses battled it out with the R&R gaining the victory. This match was the semi-final to a Flair vs. Kerry NWA Title match, and drew a healthy 9,000 paying \$75,000 on Easter Sunday.

8 Fort Worth TV MX over R&R Express 2/3 falls

9 Durant, Ok. Rogers over Eaton

10 OFF

11 Seagoville, Tx. Eaton over Rogers
 Fants over MX

12 Dallas Kerry Von Erich over Condrey
 Kerry, Kevin & Mike over MX & Kimala DQ

13 Sulphur Springs, Tx. Eaton over Fulton
 Fants over MX

14 San Marcos, Tx. 2pm J. Mantell over Condrey
 MX over Mantell & Mike Von Erich \$2,065

San Antonio 8pm Herc & MVE over MX \$10,000

15 Fort Worth TV Herc & Adias over MX DQ

16 Tyler, Tx. Kerry & Mike VE over MX

17 OFF

18 Dublin, Tx. Condrey over Rogers
 Fants over MX

19 Dallas TV Kerry Von Erich over Condrey
 MX over Scott Casey & Brian Adias

Also at this TV, the long-awaited showdown for the held-up tag titles was booked for the May 5 Texas Stadium show, providing one of the more memorable MX moments in World Class, when the Fants demanded their friend "Little John" sit next to Cornette, and he responded "Sure, where is the wee little fellow?", only to have the 7-foot-6, 400+ pound John Harris enter the arena. Harris, a horribly unathletic giant who had never wrestled, had a brief career as Little John and Silo Sam, but for anyone who ever saw him, it wasn't brief enough.

20 Muskogee, Ok. Eaton over Fulton
 Fants over MX \$14,700

21 Amarillo 2pm Herc over Condrey

MX over Herc & MVErich

Lubbock 8pm Adias over Eaton DQ

MX over Herc & MVErich

22 Fort Worth TV

Eaton drew Scott Casey 15:00 TV Title
 Kabuki over Rip Oliver \$20,700

Rip Oliver returns to JC's management to resume his program with Mike Von Erich, and promptly gets beaten his first night back by somebody else.

23 Springtown, Tx. Condrey over Fulton
 Fants over MX

24 Corpus Christi Fants over MX DQ

25 Elmore City, Ok. Eaton over Rogers
 Fants over MX \$7,750

26 Dallas Rip over Fulton
 Fants & KevinVE over MX & Rip

27 Harlingen, Tx. Condrey over Rogers
 Fants over MX

28 San Antonio Mike Von Erich over Rip
 MX DDQ Fants \$13,000

29 Fort Worth TV Rip over Adias 2/3 falls
 S.Casey over Condrey TV Title \$15,300

30 Dallas (High School Show)
 Eaton over Fulton
 Fants over MX \$8,000

MAY 1985

1 Lawton, Ok. Rogers over Condrey
 Kabuki over Rip Oliver
 MX over Fantastics \$13,000

2 Ft. Hood, Tx. Mike Von Erich over Rip
 Eaton over Rogers
 Fantastics over MX

3 Mt. Pleasant, Tx. Condrey over Fulton
 Fants over MX \$8,500

4 OFF

5 Irving, Tx. **TEXAS STADIUM**
DAVID VON ERICH MEMORIAL 2
 Mike Von Erich over Rip
 Fants over MX TO WIN ATTC \$256,000

This match was the final straw for the MX in World Class Wrestling. Looking forward to having a tear-down-the-house tag match, the MX and Fantastics were handicapped by ridiculously overbooked stipulations. Two rings were set up for the 10 man tag match on the show, so it was ruled that this match would take place in both rings as well, with all 4 men in action at once, with two referees and no DQ. Cornette was immobilized by sitting next to the useless giant

★ Wrestling Program ★



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SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 1985

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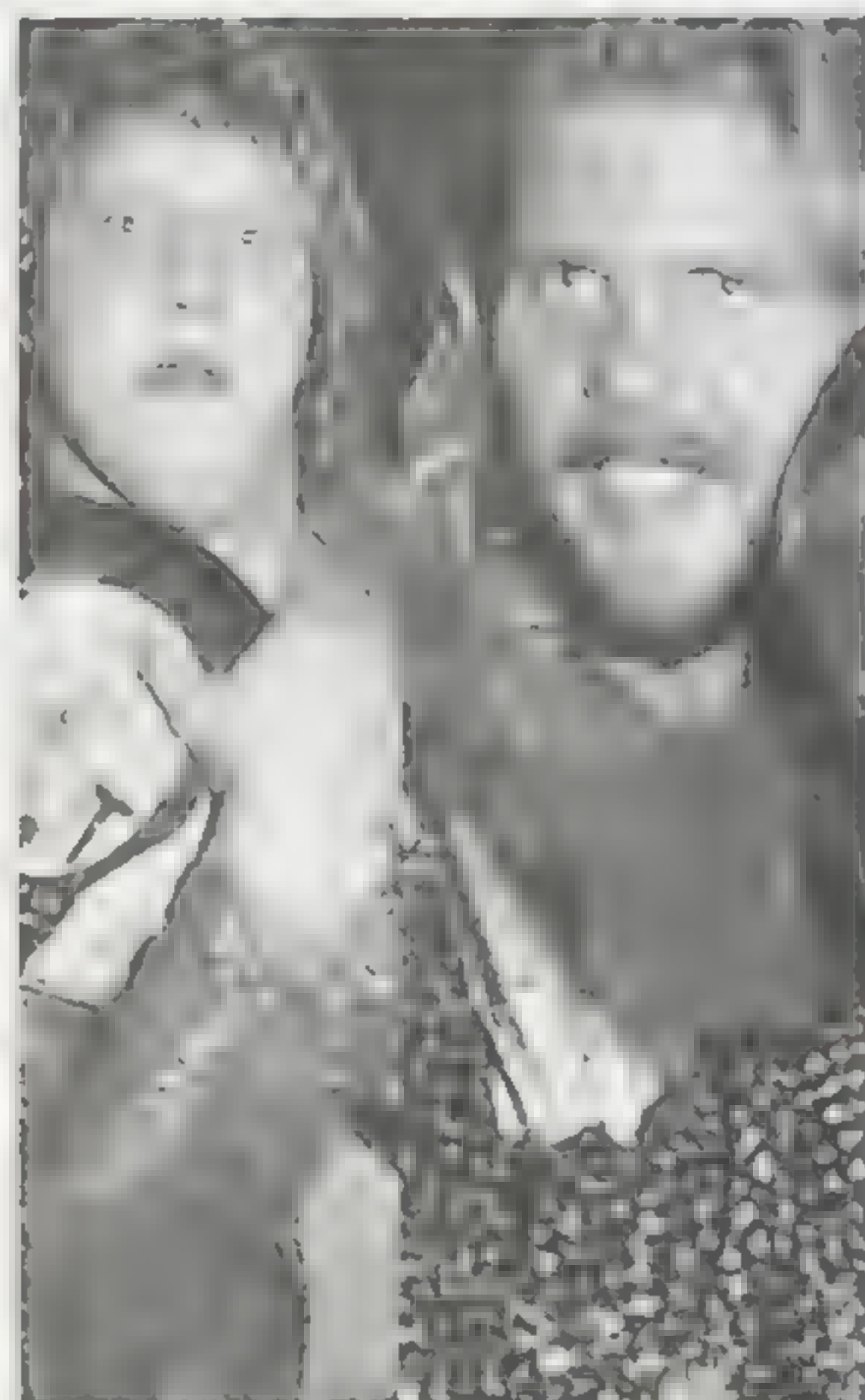
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THE FABULOUS FREEBIRDS



THE DIRTY WHITE BOYS

Welcome to Houston Wrestling's Giant Easter Extravaganza! Mid-South Wrestling and World Class Wrestling have gotten together with Promoter Paul Boesch to put together the greatest wrestling card in the history of Houston Wrestling! Tonight 28 of the all-time greatest wrestlers in the world will do battle in ten action-packed bouts, including a battle for the World Title, a North American Title Match, a Ghetto Street Fight, a Bounty Match, and a Tag Team Elimination Bout for \$100,000 and a place in tag team history!

Four of the premiere tag teams in wrestling will set foot in the ring tonight to battle each other for the richest prize ever offered in Houston Wrestling history! Bids from all over the country came in with the final four ending up as follows: The Midnight Express with manager Jim Cornette, The Fabulous Freebirds, The Dirty White Boys, and The Rock-N-Roll Express.

Here's how it works: All four teams are in the ring at the same time, each at a different corner of the ring. The legal men in the ring can tag ANYONE — not just their own tag team partner — at any time! When one member of a team is defeated, the team is eliminated! The final undefeated team in the ring will be the winners and \$100,000 richer! This is the first time a match like this has ever taken place in a Houston ring.

Don't forget Houston Wrestling continues its action-packed season on Friday night, April 19 right here in the Sam Houston Coliseum — the home of Houston Wrestling. Tickets are on sale right now in the front lobby. Get your tickets early. Don't miss it!!!

HOUSTON WRESTLING RETURNS FRIDAY - APRIL 19
8:00 P.M. IN THE SAM HOUSTON COLISEUM!!!



DAVID1 32 34 9 COMP
 .00 GATE 9 .00
 2ND ANNUAL
 * PARADE OF CHAMPIONS *
 A MEMORIAL TO
 DAVID VON ERICH
 TEXAS STADIUM/IRVING, TX
 SUN MAY 5, 1985 3:00PM

DAVID1 32 34 10 COMP
 .00 GATE 9 .00
 2ND ANNUAL
 * PARADE OF CHAMPIONS *
 A MEMORIAL TO
 DAVID VON ERICH
 TEXAS STADIUM/IRVING, TX
 SUN MAY 5, 1985 3:00PM

Texas Stadium Tickets (above) and Pay Stub (right)
 American Tag Team Champions (left)

Little John. The held-up American Tag Title would finally be decided. With no other way to work the match, the MX and Fants had a nonstop, all action four-way brawl throughout both rings, with big bumps and chairshots. It was impossible to tell any story, and the finish, which was supposed to be a near-simultaneous pin in each ring with the Fantastics winning by a hair, was instead botched by Little John getting lost on his interference. As a result, the Midnight's pin actually came clearly first, then the Fants were handed the belts, so this match hurt both teams.

Business-wise, the show drew over 20,000 fans paying \$256,000 for a loaded lineup featuring Flair vs. Kevin for the NWA Title, the 10 man tag including Flair and Kevin on opposite teams, 3 more matches involving participants in the tag who wrestled twice, plus 3 prelims. It was the 2nd biggest gate in WCCW history, and things were headed downhill from there. When the paychecks came out, the Express & JC got a measly \$1150 each, and immediately held a meeting amongst themselves.

The WCCW experience had not been all bad. After working Mid-South, the many days off and shorter trips had been welcome, as was living in a

SOUTHWEST SPORTS, INC. SPORTATORIUM

WEEKLY EARNINGS

FOR: Ornette

WEEK OF: 5/5/85

DALLAS 1,150

FT. WORTH 120

BONHAM

CAYUGA 100

MABANK

BROKEN BOW 225

DALLAS 100

PARIS

RIVER OAKS 115

TOTAL \$ 1,810

modern city like Dallas instead of backwoods Louisiana. The big-show matches with the Fantastics were usually great, and the spot show matches fun HOWEVER--After nearly 5 months in the area, the MX were STILL wrestling the Fants every night, and the booking of the program had been botched from day one. The MX had been in the same ring with the Von Erichs only a handful of times, and the VE's and their opponents were the only talents on the cards that got paid main event money. Gino Hernandez, Chris Adams and One Man Gang had those spots locked up the entire time, and while Gino & Chris were good talents, they had basically homesteaded the area, and other heels were not being given a chance.

The MX were in the tag title picture or champions for their entire tenure there, but not placed in money-drawing spots--as you can see by the gates, except for major shows, nothing else was drawing either, and the missing gates were in large part not even big enough for JC to bother asking. With the booking haphazard, leadership from the office almost nonexistent, the prospects of a program with the Von Erichs nil, and the talent trade with MSW having mostly fallen apart, the MX decided there was no

money to be made here considered their \$1000 a week average check a paid vacation, go a start date from Jim Crockett and gave their notices. All this happened by the first of June, but they weren't out of the woods just yet.

6 Fort Worth TV Rip Oliver over J. Mantell 2/3 falls (MX OFF)

7 Cayuga, Tx. Condrey over Fulton, Fants over MX 8 OFF

9 Broken Bow, Ok. Eaton over Rogers, Fants over MX

10 Dallas Scott Casey over Eaton

11 River Oaks, Tx. Condrey drew Fulton 20:00

12 St. Louis, Mo. MX DCOR Fantastics ATTC

\$15,000 (The MX debut in the historic Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis—booked out to the St. Louis Wrestling Club from WCCW, the city, once the most prized booking in the NWA, had fallen apart in the 3 years since legendary promoter Sam Muchnik's retirement, but it was still a thrill to work in the Kiel where every great name in the industry had appeared.)

13 Fort Worth TV S. Casey & Great Kabuki over MX

14 Atlanta, Tx. Condrey over Fulton, Fants over MX

15 OFF

16 Prosper, Tx. Eaton over Rogers, Fants over MX

17 Dallas TV MX over Skip Yooung & Mike Bond

18 Ft. Bliss, Tx. 2pm Condrey over Fulton

Fants over MX \$10,000

El Paso, Tx. 8pm Eaton over Fulton

Fants over MX ATTC \$22,000

19 OFF

20 Ft. Worth TV MX over Adias & Skip Young

2/3 falls, Casey over Rip

(At this TV, JC also started a feud with valet Sunshine, which at least provided some great promos and some entertainment for JC as he pushed the envelope of what could be said on Dallas TV)

21 Enid, Ok. Condrey over Fulton

Fants over MX \$16,000

22 OFF

23 Stephenville, Tx. Condrey over Rogers

Fants over MX

24 OFF

25 Amarillo, Tx. Condrey over Fulton

Fants over MX ATTC \$4,800

26 Lubbock, Tx. Fants over MX ATTC

27 Ft. Worth TV Condrey over J. Mantell \$22,000

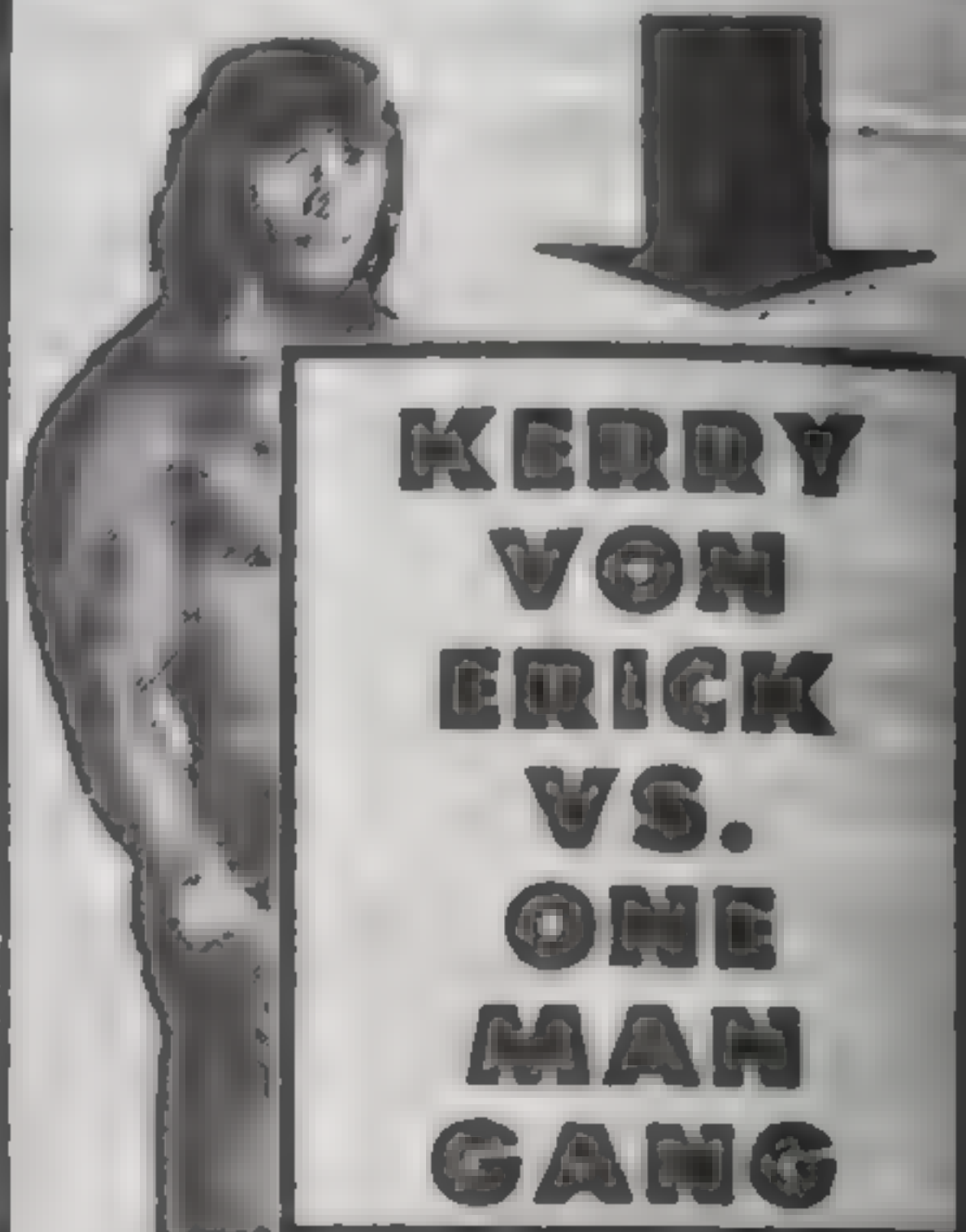
28-29 OFF

30 Kansas City, Ks. MX over Fantastics Non Title

The MX-Fants match was booked out to the

WRESTLING LUCHA LIBRE CIVIC CENTER

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1985
8:00 P.M.



**AMERICAN
TAG TEAM
Championship**

FANTASTICS

• **TOMMY ROGER**
• **BOBBY FULTON**
• **MGR. LITTLE JOHN**

VS.

• **MIDNIGHT EXPRESS,**
• **BEAUTIFUL BOBBY,**
• **LOVERBOY DENNIS,**
• **MGR. JIM CORNETTE**

**HERCULES HERNANDEZ
VS.
GINO HERNANDEZ**

**BRIAN ADIAS
VS.
STEVEN CASEY JONES**

**SCOTT CASEY
VS.
NICK KINISKI**

**WORLD CLASS
WRESTLING**

Kansas City office, which was the Poverty Row of territories at the time, and it cost the promotion 4 times as much to fly them there as they were paid.

31 Dallas TV

Fulton, Casey & Kabuki over MX & Rip DQ

JUNE 1985

1 Lynn, Mass.

Fants over MX ATTC

Kabuki over Rip \$81,000

With WCCW TV doing big ratings in the Boston area, this show was booked at a rundown outdoor stadium outside Beantown. It was the Express & JC's first time working the Northeast, and was a financial success WCCW was never able to repeat in the market.

2 OFF

3 Ft. Worth TV Fants over MX 2/3 falls Non Title

4-5 OFF

6 Burleson, Tx. Eaton over Rogers \$4,700

7 OFF

8 Fairfield, Tx. Eaton over Fulton

Fants over MX

9 San Antonio Fants over MX ATTC

10 Ft. Worth TV Kabuki & Casey over MX

11 Childress, Tx. Condrey over Fulton

Fants over MX

12 Lawton, Ok. Eaton over Rogers

13 Magnum, Ok. Rogers over Eaton \$10,000

14 Dallas, Tx. TV Rip over Fulton

Casey over Eaton

15 Irving, Tx. Eaton over Rogers

Fants over MX \$6,900

16-17 OFF

18 Converse, Tx. Condrey over Fulton

Fants over MX

19 OFF

20 Weatherford, Tx. Eaton over Rogers

Fants over MX



21 Dallas

Fants over MX ATTC

For the MX's last appearance in the Dallas Sportatorium, they channeled their disgust with WCCW into the ring, where they and the Fantast had probably the best tag match of their entire stay in the area, a wild brawl that left the fans standing and screaming, with the MX exiting out the "heat" door amid a hail of garbage from the angry fans. All 4 men put on such a performance JC wishes to this day it had been videotaped.

22 Pottsboro, Tx. Condrey drew Fulton 20:00

23 Gladewater, Tx. Condrey over Fulton

Fants over MX

24 Ft. Worth TV Kabuki over Rip 2/3 falls

25 Bridgeport, Tx. Condrey over Rogers

Fants over MX

26 OFF

27 Aubrey, Tx. Condrey drew Fulton 20:00

28 OFF

29 ATLANTA, GA. TBS

MX over Larry Clark & Dale Williams

The MX debut on Superstation TBS for Jim Crockett promotions--a convincing squash victory and long introductory promo by JC announced that the "greatest tag team in the world" had come to the NWA. The MX were flown to Atlanta on Friday evening, made the TV shot on Saturday morning, and still determined to do business the right way, flew back to Dallas to make the WCCW spot show that night and a previously-booked Mid-South double shot the next day.

Greenville, Tx. 8pm Eaton over Fulton

Fants over MX

30 Ok. City 2pm (MSW)

R&R Express over MX \$44,000

Tulsa, Ok 8pm (MSW)

Fants over MX \$42,000

ENTER THE DREAM

JULY 1985

1-3 OFF (Express & JC move to Atlanta)

The background of Jim Crockett Promotions and Mid-Atlantic Wrestling is well known to most wrestling fans. In operation for 50 years and based in Charlotte, the Crocketts had run one of the biggest and most successful regional territories in the country for two generations of the family.

Since the mid-70's, it had been the Cadillac of

wrestling promotions under the NWA banner, with every major star in the industry spending time there, and serving as the home base of then-NWA World Heavyweight Champion Ric Flair. The area had suffered somewhat at the gate during 1984, but booker Dusty Rhodes was following suit of the WWF tactics of cherry-picking the top available talent, amassing a roster of in-ring talent unparalleled in the industry. Rhodes had also pioneered the "big show" concept with Starrcade '83 in Greensboro, almost two years before Wrestlemania, and it had become an annual event drawing mega gates live and on closed-circuit.

To augment their strong regional TV syndication, which was soon to go national, Crockett had also acquired the contract to air wrestling on Superstation TBS. Vince McMahon was forced to sell it for a million dollars, partly to keep the WWF in business since he had all his money tied up in the gamble of Wrestlemania, and partly because TBS fans had been outraged when his WWF-style wrestling had replaced the Georgia wrestling they loved and had grown up with. With a major promoter, national TV, one of the most successful bookers in the business and the greatest World Champion ever behind them, the Express and JC were ready to go to the next level.

For the first 3 months of their Crockett tenure, the MX were based out of Atlanta. When acquiring TBS, Crockett had also acquired the struggling Georgia office, and the decision was made to base the MX there until it was all folded together later in the year. This was done by Dusty to keep the MX away from the Rock & Roll Express as long as possible, until pulling the trigger on their eventual program. The Rock & Roll debuted on July 1st on Mid-Atlantic TV, winning the NWA World Tag Team Title from Ivan & Nikita Koloff their first night in.

JC was not with the MX for their debut in the Omni in Atlanta on July 4, as Rhodes had agreed to let JC return to Fort Worth one last time to finish his program with Sunshine on the Star Wars event at Tarrant County Convention Center.

4 Atlanta, Ga.

MX over Brett Sawyer & Italian Stallion
4 Ft. Worth TX

Sunshine over JC Blindfold match \$138,000

Ironically, the issue between JC and Sunshine, designed mainly by JC as a Billie Jean King--Bobby Riggs style "Women's Lib" program, was the only thing WCCW let any of the MX do as they wanted,

and put in a feature position on this event, helped draw 13,000+ paying \$138,000 after 5 or 6 weeks of pretty heated TV promos. Much as the MX had done in their last Sportatorium match, JC enjoyed leaving with a "follow THAT, you bastards!" attitude.

5 Talladega, Al. MX over Sawyer & Stallion

6 ATLANTA TBS MX won 2 matches

At this point, due to the sheer volume of TV the MX was doing, plus traveling and wrestling a full schedule, JC's records of TV matches are incomplete. Every Saturday morning as a rule, the 2 hour Saturday night and 1 hour Sunday night TBS TV's would be taped at TBS studios between 9AM and 1PM. As a rule, the MX would win a squash match over jobber opponents and do an interview on at least one and usually both shows.

JC would also provide a running commentary of one-liners and smartass comments during the matches while the MX debuted their signature moves, such as the "Double Goozle", "Flapjack", "Rocket Launcher", "Veg-O-Matic", etc. These shows got the MX over more than competitive matches would have, and provided some of the more memorable MX moments of the era for fans who actually found these rotten one-sided matches entertaining for once, or got the MX a ton of heat for those who didn't get the joke. Going forward, whenever TBS TV is listed, figure the MX had at least one and possibly two matches at the tapings.

Columbus, Ga. 8pm

MX over Sawyer & Stallion \$10,200

7 Marietta, Ga. MX over Sawyer & Stallion \$10,000

8 Swainsboro, Ga.

MX over Pez Whatley & Rocky King

9 Blackshear, Ga. MX over Pez & Stallion

10 OFF

11 Kansas City, Ks.

Bob Brown & Marty Janetty over MX \$25,000

12 St. Louis, Mo.

Bob Brown & Marty Janetty over MX \$12,000

Previously booked out to the Kansas City office by WCCW, the MX honored these commitments to challenge Brown & Janetty for the Central States Tag Title and help breathe a little life into the sinking territory.

13 ATLANTA TBS 2 Tapes

At a team meeting, Rhodes gave the MX a vote of confidence by telling the talent the MX were there to be the top heel team, and would be winning

Appearing At The Historic Kiel Auditorium (right)

ST. LOUIS WRESTLING CLUB



"The Gateway to the Best"



FRIDAY, JULY 12, 1985

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 10

SINGLE COPY ONE DOLLAR

PAGE ONE



KERRY VON ERICH

Kerry VonErich, Hernandez Bring Bitter Feud North to Kiel, Friday, July 12

There is no love loss, to say the least, between Kerry Von Erich and Gino Hernandez. The two are as different as night and day, but their current feud is one of the most exciting in all of professional wrestling.

Friday, July 12, Von Erich and Hernandez will bring their feud north to St. Louis as the two grapplers will meet in the main event of the St. Louis Wrestling Club's Card at air conditioned Kiel Auditorium. The under card begins at 8:00 p.m.

Hernandez currently holds the Texas Heavyweight Championship and although the match in St. Louis is

a non-title bout, neither wrestler is taking a loose attitude.

"I hate Kerry Von Erich, it's that simple," Hernandez recently claimed "I'm not saying anything about his wrestling skills; everyone knows the guy can wrestle. But I'm the Texas Heavyweight Champion; not Kerry Von Erich, Kevin Von Erich or Mike Von Erich. And it sure will be nice to get Kerry Von Erich in the ring outside of his back yard."

The back yard that Hernandez is referring to is the state of Texas; a state many feel is owned by the Von

Continued on page 3

Midnight Express to Challenge Brown; Jannetty For Central States Tag Title

For the first time, there will be a Central States Tag Team title match in St. Louis Friday, July 12 at Kiel Auditorium.

Local favorites and champions Marty Jannetty and 'Bulldog' Bob Brown will put their belts up against the challenging 'Midnight Express' in a one fall-30 minute match.

The 'Express' is new to the Central States Area and is managed by the controversial Jim Cornette. Last time in town back in April, the 'Express' battled to a draw with the 'Fabulous Ones' as all four grapplers were disqualified. Cornette was indeed a part of that disqualification, and the Central States Champions are well aware of his reputation around the ring.

"He just better stay the heck out of the way," 'Bulldog' said. "I let Marty do all the fancy stuff and I'm the guy

who gets in there and ruffs them up a little. Sometimes we end up outside the ring, and if we do in this match, you can bet I'll have a big smile on my face if Cornette is standing close by. I'll break that stupid racquet over his stupid head."

While the 'Bulldog' is obviously pumped up and maybe even a little bit too pumped up, Jannetty realizes the importance of this match.

"We can't lose our team work because we're worrying about Cornette," Jannetty said. "If we do, we'll probably lose our belts and I don't want to see that happen; it's the only one I've got."

Not known for his lack of words, Cornette had plenty to say about the upcoming title match

"Bulldog is an old man and Jannet-

Continued on Page 3



THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

every match they were in with no exceptions until he said otherwise

Cleveland, Oh. 8pm

MX over Whatley & Stallion \$10,000

14 Charleston, W.Va.

MX over Dick Slater & Buzz Sawyer

15 Canton, Oh. MX over Pez & Stallion

16 Marion, Oh. MX over Slater & Brett Sawyer

17 Cincinnati, Oh. MX over Pez & Brett \$15,000

18 Columbus, Oh. MX over Pez & Stallion

19 Wheeling, W.Va. MX over Pez & Stallion

The MX complete their first "Northern Tour"-- for several years, the Georgia office had run Ohio, Michigan & West Virginia off the TBS TV and done very well. In the past year, because of the loss of TBS and talent to the WWF, those towns had plummeted. Crockett was in the process of rebuilding, and as you will see in 1986, did quite a good job.

20 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Columbus, Ga. 8pm MX over Pez & Stallion

21 Atlanta Omni MX over Pez & Stallion \$43,000

22 Saginaw, Mich. MX over Buzz & Brett Sawyer

23 Lansing, Mich. MX over Sawyers

24 OFF

25 Athens, Ga. MX over Brett & Stallion

26 Albany, Ga. MX over Brett & Stallion

MX won/split 18 man Battle Royal \$10,000

27 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Columbus, Ga. 8m MX over Brett & Stallion

28 Augusta, Ga. MX over Brett & Stallion

29 OFF

30 Jasper, Ga. MX over Brett & Stallion

31 OFF

AUGUST 1985

To this point, the MX had been booked in undercard matches to get wins, and gates in most of the Georgia-booked cities were small, but they had been given incredible TV time and bonuses when their weekly paychecks did not match what they had been promised as a minimum, so there were no complaints. On August 2, they got their first booking in one of the "real" Mid-Atlantic cities, and after seeing the gate, the arena, and the fan's reaction in Charlotte, they began salivating for their eventual transfer there, as they could see the potential business they could do with the Rock & Roll and others.

1 OFF

2 Charlotte, N.C.

MX over Pat Tanaka & Denny Brown \$65,000

3 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Macon, Ga. 8pm MX over Sawyers

4 Marietta, Ga.

Sawyers & Slater over MX & Bob Roop

5 OFF

6 Gainesville, Ga. MX over Sawyers

7 Wheeling, W.Va. MX over Sawyers

8 Canton, Oh. MX over Sawyers

9 Charleston, W.Va. MX over Sawyers

10 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Columbus, Ga. 8pm MX over Sawyers

11 Atlanta OMNI

MX over Buzz Sawyer & Raging Bull \$68,000

12 Greenville, S.C. TV MX over ? & ?

MX over Jim Jeffers & Gerald Findlay

The MX debut on the syndicated TV's, Mid-Atlantic and NWA Pro wrestling, with wins and interviews on each.

13 Shelby, N.C. TV MX over Ron Rossi & ?

MX over Denny Brown & Starship Eagle Dan Spivey

Rock & Roll over MX DQ

Another syndicated taping with 2 TV wins and in a dark match, the first meeting of the MX-R&R in the NWA as a "test-drive", which the sellout crowd in the Shelby Rec Center went ape shit for.

14 OFF

15 Athens, Ga. MX over Pez & Brett

16 Albany, Ga. MX over Sawyers

17 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Columbus, Oh. MX over Sawyers

18 Cleveland, Oh. MX over Sawyers

19-23 OFF (The rest of the Northern tour was cancelled, so the MX got an unplanned but much needed vacation.)

24 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Macon, Ga. 8pm

Sawyers & Terry Taylor over JC & MX COR

25 College Park, Ga. MX over Sawyers

26 Wildwood, N.J. MX over Sawyers

27 Allentown, Pa. MX over Buzz & Stallion

28 OFF

29 Athens, Ga. MX & JC over Sawyers & Stallion

30 OFF

31 Columbus, Ga.

Sawyers & Stallion over JC & MX COR

SEPTEMBER 1985

1 ATLANTA TBS TV 10am 2 tapes

Atlanta Omni 8pm

MX & JC over Sawyers & Jimmy Valiant \$61,000

2 Greenville, S.C. MX over Sawyers

ACHIEVEMENT '85

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

A LOT OF strange things happened in the voting for 1985's Manager of the Year.

Mainly, Jim Cornette won. That's remarkable, considering that his greatest achievement all year was probably insulting more fans than ever before, while appearing on WTBS' *World Championship Wrestling*.

Sure, his team The Midnight Express held the World Class tag team title earlier in the year, but after they lost the belts to The Fantastics they moved to the World Championship area, where their most notable success was in gaining the number one contention spot to NWA World tag team champs The Rock 'n' Roll Express.

But a look at the numbers in the final voting shows that this year's award could have gone to any one of a number of men.

The 10,564 votes Cornette received was the *lowest* vote total of any Achievement '85 winner. His was the closest victory over the first runner-up—another 66 votes for Lou Albano, and it would have been a dead heat.

JIM CORNETTE

10,564 votes



Cornette's victory margin over the third runner-up was also the closest of any category (1,432 votes), and there were more "votes for others" in this category than any other.

"Personally, I think Jim Cornette is great," wrote Sheila Kendricks of New Orleans. "He's handsome, witty, quick-thinking, and manages the hunkiest tag team in wrestling."

Meanwhile, Cornette will no doubt enjoy his victory as 1985's Manager of the Year, however slim the margin.

PAST WINNERS

- 1984: Paul Ellering
- 1983: James J. Dillon
- 1982: James J. Dillon
- 1981: Capt. Lou Albano
- 1980: Sir Oliver Humperdink
- 1979: Arnold Skaaland
- 1978: Arnold Skaaland
- 1977: The Grand Wizard
- 1976: Bobby Heenan
- 1975: George "Crybaby" Cannon
- 1974: Capt. Lou Albano
- 1973: The Grand Wizard
- 1972: Bobby Heenan

RUNNERS-UP

LOU ALBANO

10,498 votes



First runner-up: Lou Albano had a good year in 1985 and no doubt many fans feel he deserves this award more than Cornette. In the WWF's Manager of the Year voting, Albano was a top finisher, only to have Heenan edge him when all the hated managers pooled their votes for him. Hillbilly Jim gave Albano his votes and pushed him over the top to win the WWF's award.

PAUL ELLERING

9,956 votes



Second runner-up: Clearly, many fans are still enthralled by The Road Warriors, yet are becoming disenchanted with their manager, Paul Ellering. 1984's Manager of the Year received nearly 5,000 votes less than he did last year.

BOBBY HEENAN

9,132 votes



Third runner-up: Although one of the most hated managers anywhere in wrestling, Bobby Heenan has nevertheless risen to the top of the crowded managerial derby in the WWF to receive a great deal of admiration and respect from the fans. His recent trade with Jimmy Hart, in which he acquired King Kong Bundy for Adrian Adonis, The Missing Link, and a considerable amount of cash, may prove to be a major turning point for him in 1986.

3 Gaffney, S.C. TV 2 syndicated tapes
 4 OFF
 5 Lexington, Ky. R&R Express over MX \$78,000
 At this point, Crockett began running
 "Supershows" with the established promoters in other
 Southern territories, in this case Jerry Jarrett's
 Memphis office, using talent from TBS to augment
 the local crew. This event drew a Kentucky gate
 record with over 9,000 paying \$78,000 to see the TBS
 stars battle Memphis regulars, with the MX & R&R
 fitting both categories in a feature match on the card.
 6 Cincinnati MX over Sawyers \$15,000
 7 Richmond, Va.
 MX drew R&R 60:00 NAWWTTC \$13,000
 Another test run and the MX's first shot at the
 NWA World Tag Team Championship, also the first
 one hour draw the MX had ever done. Richmond, a
 mainstay Crockett city, was on it's ass, but compare
 this gate with the next Express match in the city in
 January.
 8 Albany, Ga. 2pm MX & JC over Sawyers & Stallion
 Marietta Ga. 8pm
 Sawyers & T Taylor over MX & JC
 9 Greenville, S.C. MX drew R&R 45:00 NAWWTTC
 10 Shelby, N.C. TV 2 tapes
 11 Kinston, N.C. MX over Spivey & Brady Boone
 12 Wheeling, W.Va.
 Sawyers & Ron Garvin over MX & JC
 13 Williamson, W.Va. MX over T Taylor & Stallion
 14 Columbus, Ga.
 MX over Sawyers Cage Loser Leaves Town
 15 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Pensacola, Fla. 8pm R&R over MX \$25,000
 (Supershow with Ron Fuller's Continental
 Wrestling)
 16 Unadilla, Ga. Eaton over Buzz Sawyer
 17 Chattanooga, Tn. MX over Pez & Stallion
 18 Raleigh, N.C. MX over Stallion & Pat Tanaka
 19 Madison Heights, Va.
 MX over Spivey & Denny Brown
 20 Columbia, S.C. MX over Spivey & Tanaka
 21 Charleston, S.C. MX over Spivey & Stallion
 22 ATLANTA TBS JC did promos
 Asheville, N.C. 2pm MX over Reeves & Stallion
 (JC in Atlanta)
 Charlotte, N.C. 8pm
 R&R over MX w/JC DQ Non Title
 \$55,000
 23 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 syndicated tapes
 MX over Pez & Ron Garvin DARK

24 Kenansville, N.C. MX over Spivey & Tanaka
 25 Johnson City, Tn.
 MX over Spivey & Tanaka \$25,000
 26 Harrisonburg, Va.
 MX over Spivey & Stallion \$9,500
 27 Norfolk, Va. MX over Spivey & Garvin \$49,000
 28 OFF
 29 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 30 Forest City, N.C. MX over ?&?
 (JC off w/sprained ankle)
OCTOBER 1985
 The MX & JC began the month having offi-
 cially moved to Charlotte, and the Georgia end of the
 territory would be folded into Mid-Atlantic within a
 few weeks thereafter.
 1 Rock Hill, S.C. TV 2 tapes
 2 Mt. Vernon, N.Y. MX over Stallion & Tanaka
 3 OFF
 4 Albany, Ga. MX over Ron Garvin & Rocky King
 5 Greensboro, N.C.
 MX DDQ J Valiant & R King \$21,000
 6 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Savannah, Ga. 8pm MX over Valiant & King
 7 Greenville, S.C. MX over Valiant & King
 8 Shelby, N.C. TV 2 syndicated tapes
 9 Raleigh, N.C. MX over Valiant & King
 10 Norfolk, Va. MX over Valiant & King
 11 Macon, Ga. MX over Valiant & King
 12 Nashville, Tn.
 Valiant & Raging Bull over MX \$41,000
 (Co-promotion w/Jerry Jarrett)
 13 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Charlotte, N.C. 8pm
 Valiant & Don Kernodle over MX DQ \$56,000
 14 Fayetteville, N.C. MX over Stallion & Tanaka
 15 Greenwood, S.C. TV 2 tapes
 R&R over MX Dark
 16 Lenoir, N.C. R&R over MX \$7,800(SC)
 17 Columbia, S.C. R&R over MX
 18 Charleston, S.C. MX over Valiant & King
 19 Greensboro, N.C.
 Valiant & Superstar Graham over MX DQ \$35,000
 20 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Atlanta Omni 8pm Condrey over Rocky King
 Valiant over Eaton DQ \$33,000
 21 Boiling Springs, N.C. Bull & Valiant over MX
 22 Mooresville, N.C. TV 2 tapes
 R&R over MX DARK \$12,000(SC)
 23 OFF
 24 Charleston, W. Va.

15 Misenheimer, N.C.

Valiant & Graham over MX	\$6,800
--------------------------	---------

16 Conway, S.C. Valiant & Graham over MX \$6,000

17 Lexington, Ky. Fabulous Ones over MX

Another co-promotion with Jarrett saw an eerily

Another co-promotion with Jarrett saw an eerily prescient meeting between Condrey & Eaton and the Fabs, Stan Lane & Steve Keirn--this, and the following night in Memphis, were the only meeting ever between the two groundbreaking teams.

18 Memphis, Tn.	Fabs over MX	\$37,000
-----------------	--------------	----------

19 Greenwood, S.C. TV 2 tapes

20 Raleigh, N.C.

MX & JC over Valiant, Graham & King

21 Kansas City, Ks. TAG TEAM TOURNAMENT

MX over Rufus R. Jones & Art Crews

MX over Brett Sawyer & Marty Janetty

MX over Tarzan Goto & Akio Sato

Bart & Brad Batten over MX

The Central States office asked for the MX to run for a tournament for the Central States Tag to give credibility to the Battens, who defeated K in the finals)

22 Hendersonville, N.C.

Valiant & Graham over MX DO	\$7,500
-----------------------------	---------

23 Lakeland, Fla.

MX over J Valiant & Frank Lane	\$23,000
--------------------------------	----------

Co-promotion with Championship Wrestling from Florida--to their regret, the MX and JC never got to work for Eddie Graham, the booking genius who taught Bill Watts, Dusty Rhodes, and so many more, as he had died earlier in 1985.

24 Marietta, Ga. R&R over MX DO

25 Easley, S.C. R&R over MX DO

26 Lincolnton, N.C. R&R over MX DO

27 Raleigh, N.C.

Valiant & Billy Jack Haynes over MX

28 ATLANTA OMNI/GREENSBORO COLISEUM

PROMOTIONS, INC	41817
	555
Golden Path	
115	5
	5225
	5870

PROMOTIONS, INC 41817

[illegible]

Warden Path
115

[illegible]

	5725
	5870

14 Columbia, N.C.

MX over Valiant & Graham COR \$11,000

65

STARRCADE '85

Jimmy Valiant & Miss. Atlanta Lively over MX

The 3rd annual Starrcade event--after working with Jimmy Valiant and various partners for the previous few months, an angle was shot on TV for Valiant's partner to be Miss Atlanta Lively (Ron Garvin dressed as a woman--the explanation would take half this book) in an Atlanta Street Fight.

Starrcade '85 was a groundbreaking event in that it would take place in BOTH the company's major arenas, the Greensboro Coliseum and the Atlanta Omni, with half the matches in each city and the fans attending live watching the other half on the big screen closed circuit broadcast. In addition, the entire card would be beamed to screens in a number of other locations.

This concept would be copied by the WWF for the following year's Wrestlemania, the last event to be Closed Circuited before pay-per-view became mainstream as a technology. The MX's match, a wild and bloody clothes-ripping Street Fight in which all 3 MX members wore tuxedos to maximize the heat, was positioned third from the top of the card, underneath Flair vs. Rhodes for the World Title and the Rock & Roll regaining the NWA World Tag Title from the Russians, on the biggest-grossing NWA event of all time, and second-biggest grossing pro wrestling event in history, behind only Wrestlemania I.

The event sold out the Greensboro Coliseum with 16,000 paying \$307,000, drew over 15,000 to the Omni paying \$285,000, with closed circuit locations in Charlotte doing \$70,000, Norfolk \$44,700, Spartanburg \$54,000, Roanoke \$25,000, and the New Orleans Superdome drawing \$98,000 for a total gross of over \$880,000. Over 60,000 fans left their homes on Thanksgiving night to see this event in some form or venue.

29 St. Louis, Mo. Valiant & Graham over MX
30 Macon, Ga. Valiant & Graham over MX

DECEMBER 1985

1 Marietta, Ga. Valiant & Garvin over MX DQ
2 Honea Path, S.C. MX over Valiant & Sam Houston
3 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes
4 OFF
5 Amelia, Va. R&R over MX DQ
6 Hampton, Va.

Valiant, Lively & Ron Bass over MX & JC
7-13 OFF

14 Conway, S.C.

MX over Valiant & Sam Houston CAGE

15 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Greensboro, N.C. Valiant over Eaton DQ

Condrey drew Kernodle 20:00

Bunkhouse Stampede \$60,000

Two weeks after Starrcade, the return to Greensboro for the first-ever Bunkhouse Stampede drew 7000+paying \$60,000. The Stampede, a Street Fight Battle Royal featuring every wrestler on the card, was another Dusty Rhodes brainchild which would become an annual event for the next few years

16-24 CHRISTMAS BREAK

25 Greenville, S.C.

Valiant & Lively over MX CAGE \$16,000(SO)

Christmas Day in Greenville was Fan Appreciation Day, with all seats \$3.00, and 5,300 fans paying \$16,000 for a sellout.

26 Norfolk, Va.

Valiant & Lively over MX CAGE \$29,384

27 Columbia, S.C.

Valiant & Lively over MX Street Fight \$8,300

28 Greensboro, N.C. TV 2pm 2 tapes

Philadelphia, Pa. 8pm

Condrey drew Kernodle 20:00

Bunkhouse Stampede \$116,000

Crockett was beginning a Northeast expansion and the MX's first appearance in Philly, which would become an important city for them, for the Bunkhouse Stampede drew 10,000 paying \$116,000.

29 Asheville, N.C. 2pm

Valiant & Lively over MX CAGE \$13,000

Savannah, Ga. 8pm

Valiant & Lively over MX Street Fight

30 Fayetteville, N.C.

R&R over MX DQ Non Title \$11,000

31 OFF

As 1985 drew to a close, the Express had been pushed for 6 months as a top heel team, while the Rock & Roll had reigned for the same time as World Tag Champions and come out on top of a long program with the Russians. For 1986, Dusty had made plans to shoot the angles which would set the stage for the first battle of the Expresses on the national stage. It would be a wild ride.

As 1986 began, Jim Crockett promotions was set to take off. Booker Dusty Rhodes had his talent in place--coming off the incredible success of Starrcade '85, Flair and Dusty were set for big-money rematches

STARRCADE '85

The Gathering

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1985 • 7:00 P.M.

N.W.A. WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE MATCH

RIC FLAIR

VS

DUSTY RHODES

WORLD TAG TEAM TITLE MATCH

(In Steel Cage)

IVAN KOLOFF

VS

ROCK 'N ROLL EXPRESS

NIKITA KOLOFF

(with Don Kernodle)

(With Krusher Khrushchev)

ATLANTA STREET FIGHT

JIMMY VALIANT

VS

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

MS. ATLANTA LIVELY

(managed by Jim Cornett)

(managed by Big Mama)

U.S. HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE "I QUIT" MATCH

(In steel cage)

TULLY BLANCHARD

VS

MAGNUM T.A.

(with Baby Doll)

INTERMISSION

NATIONAL TAG TEAM TITLE MATCH

OLE ANDERSON

VS

WAHOO McDANIEL

ARN ANDERSON

BILLY JACK HAYNES

\$10,000 ARM WRESTLING CONTEST PRIOR TO MATCH

SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM

VS

THE BARBARIAN

(managed by Paul Jones)

TEXAS BULL ROPE MATCH

RON BASS

VS

BLACK BART

If Bass wins, he meets J. J. Dillon in a five-minute bull rope match

MEXICAN DEATH MATCH

RAGING BULL

VS

ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER

MID-ATLANTIC TITLE MATCH

SAM HOUSTON

VS

KRUSHER KHRUSCHEV

THUNDERFOOT

VS

THE ITALIAN STALLION

PEZ WHATLEY

VS

MIKE DAVIS



1986--or-- How To Get Rich Beating On Ricky

for the NWA World Title. The Rock & Roll and Midnight Expresses, after test-run matches, were set to shoot angles and wrestle each other for the NWA World Tag Team Title, and the Road Warriors were positioned as Andre the Giant-like special attractions to face either the Russians or Horsemen Tully Blanchard and Am Anderson. Magnum TA was United States Champion and a future World Champion. As well, Crockett's plans were in place to leave his Carolinas-Virginia base to tour some of the major cities in the country off his TBS exposure.

In 1986, Jim Crockett promotions would gross more money than any NWA promotion ever, and more money than all but a few years of the now-national WWF

January 1986

1 Atlanta Omni MX over R&R Non Title \$60,000
New Year's Day Fan Appreciation night in the Omni drew 12,000 fans paying \$5 each for \$60,000,

and the MX gain an important non-title victory over the R&R after bloodying both.

2 Harrisonburg, Va. R&R over MX Non Title \$9,300
3 Fredericksburg, Va.

MX over R&R Non Title \$10,300

4 Atlanta TBS 2 tapes

Greensboro, N.C. Morton over Condrey \$62,000

5 Asheville, N.C. MX over R&R Non Title \$20,000

6 Iva, S.C. Valiant & Lively over MX \$63,000

7 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes

The first major angle between the MX & R&R when the Midnight run in on an R&R match and hit Morton in the throat with the tennis racket, he bleeds from the mouth, and it draws incredible heat.

8 Raleigh, N.C.

R&R over MX DQ NWA WTTC \$10,000

9 Canton, Oh. R&R over MX NWA WTTC \$21,000

10 Norfolk, Va.

Valiant & Lively over MX & JC \$63,000

11 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes



Columbus, Ga. 8pm		20 Fayetteville, N.C.	
R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC	\$8,700	MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC	\$24,000
12 Cleveland, Oh.		21 Shelby, N.C. TV 2 tapes	
MX over Valiant & Houston	\$41,000	22 Raleigh, N.C. R&R over MX NWA WTTC	\$11,111
13 Greenwood, S.C. TV 2 tapes		23 Cheraw, S.C. MX over Pez & Gavin	\$9,500(SO)
R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC DARK	\$9,700	24 Johnson City, Tn.	
14 Greenville, S.C.		R&R over MX NAWWTTC	\$58,000(SO)
MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC	\$41,000	(The all-time record gate in Johnson City, with	
15-16 OFF		6,500 paying \$58,000.)	
17 Richmond, Va.		25 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes	
MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC	\$88,000(REC)	Columbus, Ga. 8pm	
Underneath Flair-Dusty, the first Express		R&R over MX NAWWTTC	\$8,900
match in Richmond for the Title after their TV angle		26 Marietta, Ga. R&R over MX NAWWTTC	
draws a record gate, \$75,000 MORE than the gate in		27 Greenville, S.C.	
September 1985.		R&R over MX NAWWTTC revdec.	\$26,000
18 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes		28 Rock Hill, S.C. TV 2 tapes	
Philadelphia 8pm		29 Raleigh, N.C. R&R over MX NAWWTTC	\$12,400
MX over Ron Bass & Pez Whatley	\$102,000	30 Washington, N.C. R&R over MX Non title	\$8,300
19 Roanoke, Va. 3pm		31 Columbia, S.C.	
MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC	\$15,000	R&R over MX NWA WTTC	\$8,900
Atlanta Omni 8pm			
MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC	\$82,000		

FEBRUARY 1986

1 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
Philadelphia 8pm
R&R over MX NAWWTTC (revdec) \$61,000
2 Charlotte, N.C. 2PM
R&R over MX NAWWTTC (revdec) \$101,000
The first Express showdown in Charlotte, in the main event, without Flair, Dusty or the Road Warriors on the card, drew 12,000 fans paying \$101,000, the record gate for Crockett's home city and the first legitimate sellout of the Charlotte Coliseum since Flair vs. Blackjack Mulligan in 1978. This cemented the MX-R&R's reputation as the hottest tag team program in wrestling, but the Expresses' had no time to rest on their laurels, as immediately after exiting the ring, they jumped in their cars and drove the 250 miles to Atlanta for the biggest TV moment in NWA history.

Atlanta OMNI 8pm
TBS SUPERSTARS ON THE SUPERSTATION
MX over R&R to WIN NAWWTTC \$60,000
This was the taping of the first-ever TBS prime time wrestling special, broadcast 8-10pm the following Friday night. Over 7,000 live and an audience of several million on TV saw the MX win the NWA World Tag Team Title. Both teams arrived at the Omni around 8pm, as tape was about to roll. They dressed, figured the finish, and were in the ring for the biggest audience of their careers in less than 90 minutes. The match helped both Expresses' growing reps for having the state-of-the-art tag match of the time.

But all was not good news in the Crockett camp. In a TBS TV match early in January, Krusher

Krushev (Barry Darsow) suffered a serious knee injury and underwent major surgery. In the pre-contract days, if you didn't wrestle, you didn't get paid. As a show of support, all the Crockett wrestlers, from prelims to main events, pledged \$25 from each of their weekly paychecks to Barry, with Crockett promotions matching the total amount collected, to provide him with income while he was injured.

When Magnum TA had his career-ending auto accident in the Fall, the same thing was done for him. This is reflected in the pay stubs reproduced on this page and elsewhere as "Transfers Barry" or "Transfer, Magnum".

3 Greenville, S.C.

MX drew R&R 2/3 falls 60:00 WTTC
4 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes
5 OFF

6 Boone, N.C.

R&R over MX NAWWTTC DQ \$19,300
7 Norfolk, Va.

MX drew R&R 60:00 NAWWTTC \$37,000
8 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
St. Louis, Mo. 8pm

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$43,000
9 Cleveland, Oh. R&R over MX Non Title \$27,000
10 Taylorsville, N.C.

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$10,130
11 Rock Hill, S.C. TV 2tapes

MX over Pez & Houston NAWWTTC
Dusty & TA over MX DQ DARK \$17,000
12 Raleigh, N.C.

JIM CROCKETT PROMOTIONS, INC.						42902
NORTH CAROLINA						
		350				350
SOUTH CAROLINA						
		285	4/0			325
	750	1350				2100
	Columbus	CIN. OH	T.V.	Atlanta		
	200	1250	4/0	1000		2490
	3/4-10/86		Barry	25		5265 (25) 5240

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$12,800
 13 Columbia, S.C.
 R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC
 14 Cincinnati, Oh.
 R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$26,000
 15 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 MX over Bass & Kernodle NAWWTTC
 Greensboro, N.C. 8pm
 R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$65,000
 16 Charleston, S.C.
 MX over R&R NAWWTTC \$13,500
 This match was scheduled to be a one hour
 draw, but after 60:00, the timekeeper at ringside
 would not ring the bell because he was convinced the
 R&R was about to win, so with no other recourse but
 to wrestle all night, a quick plan B was implemented
 with the MX cheating to win and keep the belts.
 17 Fayetteville, N.C. TV 2 tapes \$30,731
 18 Greenville, S.C.
 R&R over MX DQ 2/3 falls NAWWTTC \$24,000
 This match, after a previous 60:00 draw in
 Greenville, had a 90:00 time limit.
 19 Valley Forge, Pa.
 R&R over MX non title \$20,000
 20 Baltimore, Md.

MX over R&R NAWWTTC \$132,000(SO-REC)
 The first Express battle in Baltimore also
 with Flair-Dusty in the main event drew a record
 13,000+ and a record gate.
 21 Richmond, Va
 MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$103,600
 (A long way from that \$13,000 gate last
 September)
 22 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Roanoke, Va. 8PM
 Garvin & Bull over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$18,000
 23 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Charlotte, N.C. 8pm
 R&R over MX DQ 2/3 NAWWTTC \$101,000(SO)
 The second Express showdown in Charlotte, a
 2/3 fall double main event with Flair vs. Dusty for the
 NWA Title, draws the second sellout of 12,000+ in a
 3 week period.
 24 East Rutherford, N.J.
 R&R over MX DQ non title \$86,000
 Crockett's first solo promotion in the New Jersey
 Meadowlands Arena draws almost 10,000 fans on a
 Monday night.
 25 Greenwood, S.C. TV 2 tapes \$13,300
 Doing another physically demanding angle

Paycheck Stub (left)

Tommy Young Locks JC Up (below)

Robert Gibson Swings The Cage (right)





with the R&R at this TV, the MX accidentally broke Ricky Morton's hand. Incorporating it into the angle, Ricky began using the plaster cast as a weapon, and JC cried foul on TV interviews. Morton never missed a match from the injury

26 N. Wilkesboro, N.C.

R&R over MX DQ non title \$10,461(SO)

27 Bennettsville, S.C.

R&R over MX non title \$9,441(SO)

Just booking the Expresses against each other on the small-town spot shows in the Carolinas now resulted in advance sellouts of the high school gyms that seated 1,000-2,000.

28 Columbia, S.C.

MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$38,000(SO)

In the main event spot, the Express match drew a record gate in Columbia, with over 4,500 fans making the first Columbia sellout since 1981. Only an 80 mile drive from the MX's homes in Charlotte, the Columbia Township Auditorium was an historic wrestling arena in Crocketts' territory since the '40's. Longtime promoter Henry Marcus, known "affectionately" as "High Pockets" Marcus, probably had a stroke when he found out Crockett paid the MX \$1,000 each for the sellout.

72

MARCH 1986

1 Greensboro, N.C.

MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$75,000

2 Charlotte 2pm

MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$73,000

Following up the 2/2 and 2/23 Charlotte sellouts, this Sunday matinee event drew over 8000 paying \$73,000 for a wild best of 3 affair with no DQ stip.

St. Louis, Mo 8pm

R&R over MX DQ 2/3 falls NWA WTTC \$36,000

With business on fire, the MX and JC were drawing paychecks of \$4,000-\$5,000 a week on a regular basis--figure Flair and Dusty for 3 times that amount.

3 Greenville, S.C.

MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$22,000

4 Spartanburg, S.C. TV

MX over Pez & Rocky King

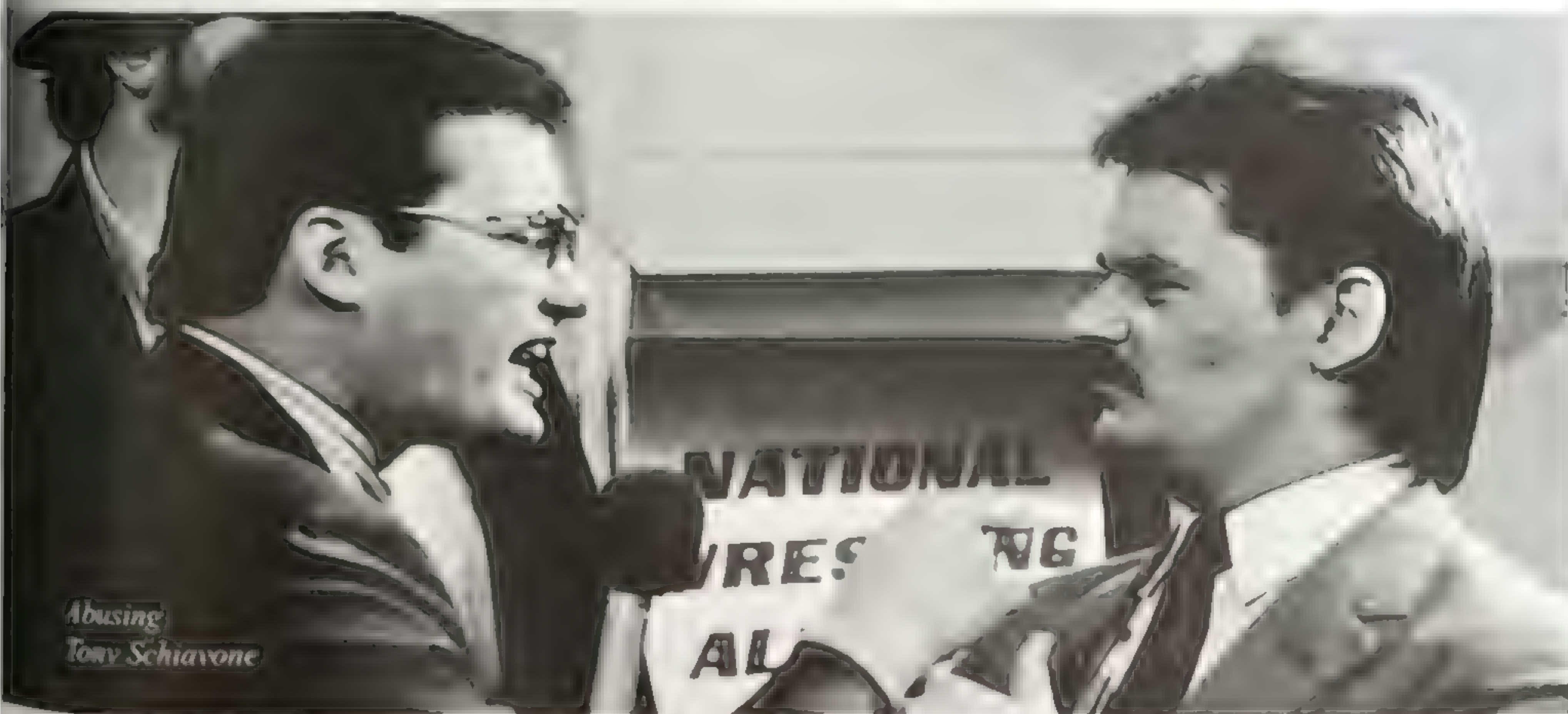
MX over Stallion & Kernodle \$11,700(SO)

The syndicated TV tapings, held in small gyms in a 100 mile radius of Charlotte, were now routinely selling out.

5 Raleigh, N.C.

MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$18,600
 6 Columbus, Ga
 Garvin & TA over MX DQ WTTC
 7 Norfolk, Va
 MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$104,600
 This event set a record gate for Norfolk's Scope Coliseum with a sellout of 12,000 fans paying \$104,600, the first sellout of the Scope since the '70's
 8 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Cincinatti, Oh. 8pm
 MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$100,000(SO)
 The biggest night in Cincinatti wrestling history-- this event sold out the Cincinatti Gardens with an all-time record gate, over 10,700 fans, while the WWF with Hulk Hogan at Riverfront Coliseum drew over 6,000 fans the same night. The one-night total of almost 17,000 fans for the city remains a record

\$40,000
 16 Asheville, N.C. 2pm
 MX over R&R NWA WTTC JC in cage \$34,000(SO)
 This card, with the Express match as main event, sold out the Asheville Civic Center with about 5,000 paying \$34,000, both all-time records, and hundreds turned away
 Cleveland, Oh. 8pm
 MX over R&R NWA WTTC \$60,925(SO)
 This event sold out with 7000+ fans, a record gate, and some turned away. If you're wondering how in the Hell these guys made this ridiculous schedule early in 1986 Crockett bought a refurbished commuter plane, a Gulfstream 2 that seated 18, and the top talent took this plane to the shows all over the East Coast. Later, a Falcon F-20 jet would be added, and the G-2 would become known as the "Jabronie Jet". Even with their own planes, this schedule would provide plenty



9 Roanoke, Va. 2pm
 MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$42,000(REC)
 Atlanta Omni 8pm
 R&R over MX NWA WTTC DQ JC in Cage \$79,000
 10 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes
 MX over George South & Kernodle
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ non title DARK
 11-13 OFF
 14 Bassett, Va. R&R over MX non title \$17,000(SO)
 15 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Charleston, W.Va. 8pm
 MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls

of photo finishes in getting to the events
 17 Greenville, S.C.
 R&R over MX non title JC in cage \$16,000
 18 Mooresville, N.C. TV
 MX over Don & Rocky Kernodle
 MX over Bull & Ron Bass DARK \$14,000
 19 Raleigh, N.C.
 R&R over MX non title JC in cage \$14,600
 20 Macon, Ga. R&R over MX non title \$16,000
 21 Huntington, W.Va.
 MX over R&R NWA WTTC 2/3 falls \$47,000(SO)
 With almost 6,000 fans, the Civic Center was

oversold for it's setup, and the fans were so angry at the MX winning that they were mobbed trying to go back to the locker room. JC, swinging the racket at everything to fight his way through the mob, ended up with 4 arrest warrants for assault, but pleaded no contest and paid \$100 fine after the police corroborated his story that he was only acting in self-defense.

22 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Philadelphia 8pm

MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC \$95,000

23 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes

2 MX matches

TA over Eaton US Title DARK

Columbia, S.C. 8pm

MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC \$28,000

24 New Orleans, La. MX over R&R NAWWTTC

25 Rock Hill, S.C. R&R over MX non title \$26,000

26 Raleigh, N.C. R&R & TA over MX & JC \$11,752

27 Norfolk, Va.

MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$34,000

28 Richmond, Va.

R&R over MX non title JC in cage \$99,500

(The Richmond Coliseum draws in excess of 10,000 fans)

29 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Greensboro, N.C. 8pm

R&R over MX non title JC in cage \$95,000

(The Greensboro Coliseum once again draws over 10,000 fans)

30 Savannah, Ga. 2pm

MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC \$23,000

Atlanta Omni 8pm

R&R & Nighthawk over MX & JC \$60,000

31 Baltimore

MX over R&R DQ NAWWTTC \$78,000

APRIL 1986

1 Canton, OH.

R&R over MX DQ 2/3 falls WTTC \$11,200

2 California, Pa.

R&R over MX DQ 2/3 falls WTTC \$19,000

3 St. Marys, Pa.

R&R over MX DQ 2/3 falls WTTC \$24,000(SO)

4 Roanoke, Va.

R&R over MX non title JC in cage \$40,000

5 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Charleston, W.Va. 8pm

R&R over MX non title JC in cage \$30,000

6 Johnson City, Tn 2pm

R&R over MX non title JC in cage \$40,000

Savannah, Ga. 8pm

R&R over MX non title JC in cage

7 Gallney, S.C. R&R over MX non title \$89,000(SO)

8 Greenwood, S.C. TV

MX over Rocky Kernodle & D. Brown

9 Raleigh, N.C. MX over Rocky King & Ron Rossi

10 Kershaw, S.C R&R over MX non title (JC off sick)

11 Mt. Airy, N.C. Bull & R. Garvin over MX DQ

12 ATLANTA TBS 2 Tapes

Charlotte, N.C. 8pm

R&R over MX non-title JC in cage \$101,000(SO)

This was the fourth and final match of this R&R-MX series in the Charlotte Coliseum. Each match had been either main event or semi-final, and this drew another sellout 12,000 paying \$101,000. This card was also closed-circuited to the Charlotte Park Center for the overflow of about 600 paying \$4,000, and to the Spartanburg Memorial Auditorium as an experiment, drawing a \$4,000 gross there. The total for this show was about 13,000 fans paying \$109,000. This match also aired in its entirety on Japanese TV on the World Pro Wrestling show. Totals for the Charlotte series on 2/2, 2/23, 3/2 and 4/12: almost 46,000 paying \$384,000.

13 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Atlanta Omni 8pm

MX over Road Warriors DQ WTTC \$43,000

14 Saginaw, Mich.

R&R over MX DQ NWA WTTC \$27,000

15 Lansing, Mich.

MX over Morton & Kernodle WTTC \$22,800

16 Raleigh, N.C.

MX drew TA & Bull 60:00 WTTC \$12,000

17 Bessemer City, N.C.

R&R over MX non title \$14,000(SO)

18 Philadelphia

MX over Road Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$60,000

19 NEW ORLEANS SUPERDOME

FIRST ANNUAL CROCKETT CUP

TAG TOURNAMENT

The Crockett Cup was a 24 team tag tournament co-promoted with Bill Watts in the Superdome- an afternoon 2pm first & second round, and evening 3rd & 4th round at 8pm. Teams from both MSW and NWA were entered, as well as Kansas City, Oregon, Memphis and Japan (Giant Baba & Tiger Mask), and the Midnight Express were seeded #3 behind the Road Warriors and Magnum TA & Ron Garvin, just ahead of #4 seed Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson. In the tourney, MX got a first round bye, defeated Nelson

Royal & Sam Houston in the 2nd round, and lost by DQ to eventual winners the Road Warriors in the third round.

The Dome gates were disappointing due to the economic recession of the time in New Orleans--only \$35,000 for the afternoon session, and \$140,000 for the evening, totaling \$175,000 for the day.

20 Savannah, Ga. R&R & Bull over MX & JC

21 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes

(This taping began a program between the MX and Dusty Rhodes, Magnum TA and Baby Doll, when the MX attacked Dusty, and JC hit Doll in the stomach with the tennis racket, where it was later revealed that she "may not be able to have children". This angle got some pretty serious heat--the MX began carrying handguns in their cars as they had in Mid-South.)

22-23 OFF

24 Columbia, S.C.

R&R & Garvin over MX & JC \$12,000

25 Richmond, Va.

MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$70,500

26 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes

Baltimore 8pm

MX over Bull & H. Guerrero NAWWTTC \$58,900

27 Cleveland, Oh.

MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$42,000

28 Forest City, N.C.

R&R over MX non title \$15,700(SO)

29 Macon, Ga. R&R over MX non title \$14,000

30 Raleigh, N.C. Gibson over Eaton

JC drew Gibson 5:00 \$58,000(SO)

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...

Another turning point for the MX & JC came in May--Ernie Ladd, their old friend from Mid-South, called JC at home and offered them an opportunity to work for the WWF. Ernie was working as an advisor/talent scout for Vince McMahon at the time, and told the MX that they could make more money than they'd ever made, and even made a tantalizing reference to \$25,000 signing bonuses that had been

talked about

The three were more than happy where they were, and truthfully didn't even watch WWF programming, but they knew a lot of guys there were making money, so they agreed to a meeting. JC took great pains to make sure it was a secret, having the plane tickets sent to his house, insisting on a neutral meeting place instead of the WWF office, and arranging the trip to Connecticut on a day the MX already had off, all to avoid suspicion on Crockett's part.

This was blown pretty well immediately when, boarding the plane to New York at the Charlotte airport, they came face to face with one of Tully Blanchard's best friends, who worked for the airline. Here, for the first time ever, is JC's personal account of the meeting, and why the MX never went to the WWF:

"We flew to New York, were met by a limo, and driven to a first class hotel in Stamford, where we were checked into a room and told Vince would be there momentarily. At that point, we were thinking we had really hit the big time, and this guy must have major plans for us. When Vince arrived, larger than life as we expected, he ordered us a big room service lunch, and the meeting began."

"Going in, what we had expected to hear was a business pitch about how we'd be used, i.e., "You'll be our top, or secondary, or underneath, heel team, we have babyface teams like _____ or _____ for you to work with", or "we'll bring you in for a program with _____ and see how it goes", or "you'll get a run with the belts, then drop them to _____", or ANYTHING about what we'd be doing in the ring.

We knew for the MX to get over, we needed to have good teams to work with, and a chance to tear the house down by wrestling, not posing."

"We expected to hear about the money ball-park we'd be playing in. For top guys, especially ones being asked to jump to a competitor, a booker or promoter would at least give you a minimum guarantee, or tell you a range of what to expect--Watts had told us we'd make between 50 and 100 grand each for the year, which we knew meant 50 if we were passable, 100 if we set records, and we made the 100."

"Dusty had assured us we would make as much or more as we did for Watts, and we were on track to make twice that. Even if Vince didn't want to give us a guarantee, we needed to hear estimates, for God's sake--after all, THEY called US! As a manager, I wanted to hear something about how I would be

used, or figured in to the manager crew he already had Bobby Heenan was my idol, Jimmy Hart was an old friend, and I had no problem with competition, but at some point you can't have any more managers doing 2:00 promos on the TV show, and part of our formula was me pissing the people off on TV so they'd pay to see the Express get beat up at the arenas."

"We heard NONE of that. No prospective opponents. No thoughts for a program. No ideas for any angle we might debut with or shoot once we got over. No idea of the spot. No mention of the "signing bonus". No money figures AT ALL. No talk about anything related to our performance at all, other than the obligatory "I've heard wonderful things about your work ethic". I later learned, working for Vince in the '90's, that he NEVER watched any other wrestling besides WWF, so he had probably never even seen us before, and was going on stooge's recommendations, as he does for most everything.

He repeated several times that we'd have the opportunity to make more money than we'd ever made, "It's all up to you." WHAT THE FUCK DID THAT MEAN?? No, it's not up to us, not if you don't put us on TV and put us over, not if we don't have a top spot or anyone to work with to have great matches, which we had no idea at the time was fairly low on Vince McMahon's priority list in promoting wrestling."

"He spoke about their expansion, the great TV network, the Wrestlemania concept, etc., and he didn't really blister the NWA, which he probably knew wouldn't set well with us. He nodded at Bobby & Dennis' heads and said, "We don't get juice anymore", which in a way made us nervous. Then came the dolls."

"He went into great length about the new concept of the action figures, which in 1986 were still called "Dolls". He talked about how they went to great pains to make them look like you, the bodies, the faces, they would be in every store, the royalty checks would come out quarterly, etc.--on and on about DOLLS! So long about dolls, in fact, that we zoned out the rest of the meeting. DOLLS?? We're heels, why the fuck would we want people to buy our shit, anyway? Twenty years later, when thinking about our meeting with Vince, the first thing that comes to mind is "DOLLS!"

"We talked awhile longer without hearing answers to any of the things we needed to know, which we were too dumbfounded at that point to ask, and which he should have offered anyway if he really wanted US, as opposed to just collecting wrestlers, since we were happy where we were. We said we'd think about

it, shook hands, and watched him drive off in an antique car that looked like it came straight out from under John Steed in a black & white episode of the Avengers. We ended up not going. And we were both right, Vince and we."

"Because Vince made a fortune on the dolls, and a lot of the guys made more from dolls than they did from wrestling. Vince got a lot of guys over, and some of them made more money than we ever dreamed of. We might have made a little more there than we did where we were. But we wouldn't have enjoyed it as much, we wouldn't have lasted as long, wouldn't have had the great matches, and I wouldn't be writing this right now because the Midnight Express wouldn't have been as important a part in wrestling history as they are. The styles just didn't fit."

"We were heels who pissed people off so badly in large numbers that they paid to see us get our asses kicked. We sold personal issues and great matches, not ice cream bars and eight minute performances by the numbers. We worked programs to keep the gates up, not tours of towns twice a year. We got death threats and started riots and made the babyfaces look like a million dollars, and people were currently buying tickets in large numbers to see us do it, and we wouldn't have fit in doing comedy sketches on Saturday Night's Main Event."

"We were making a lot of money, on national TV, living in beautiful North Carolina, working for and with people who appreciated what we did, and at the risk of sounding like a mark, we were the NWA World Tag Team Champions at a time when belts weren't just passed around like props, it meant your promotion thought you were the best team in the company for business. We believed our talent roster--Flair & the Horsemen, Dusty, Magnum, Road Warriors, Rock & Roll--was the best in the business. Why would we leave for an "opportunity?"

"In the end, we had two more good-to-great years with Crockett, and two more financially successful if creatively frustrating ones with WCW, and created a body of work that is the reason this book is being published. And we're all still breathing. So all in all, we made the right choice."

MAY 1986

1 Columbia, S.C.

MX over Dusty & TA DQ NWAWTTC

\$22,000
 2 OFF
 3 ATLANTA TBS TV
 James Boys (Dusty & TA) over MX non title
 Greensboro 8pm
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$52,000
 4 Asheville, N.C. 2pm
 MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$28,000
 Philadelphia 8pm
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$55,000
 5 Fayetteville, N.C.
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$16,000
 6 Spartanburg TV
 MX over Houston & Royal
 MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$11,600(SO)
 This TV was a famous incident where the
 James Boys, Dusty & TA under masks, hit the ring,
 kidnapped JC, put a noose around his neck, tied him
 to the back bumper of a pickup truck, and tried to
 drive off with him until the MX saved him in the nick
 of time. In reality, Baby Doll, the driver, jumped the
 cue, and if JC hadn't slipped the noose on his own, his
 head would have been separated from his body. As it
 was, the angle was deemed too graphic for TV of the
 time, and the video was frozen before the truck took
 off so the audio could tell the story.
 7 Ronda, N.C. R&R over MX non title
 8 Whitmire, S.C.
 MX over R. Kernodle & Stallion \$7,300
 9 Richmond, Va.
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$39,000
 10 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
 Charlotte 8pm
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ NWA WTTC \$54,000
 11 Atlanta Omni
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ NWA WTTC \$63,000
 12 Oakwood, Va. MX over Bull & Hector \$15,000
 13 Richburg, S.C. TV
 MX over R. Kernodle & D. Brown
 MX over R. King & Sam Houston
 14 Raleigh, N.C.
 MX over Bull & Hector NAWWTTC
 15 Lovington, Va.
 MX over Bull & Hector non title
 16 OFF
 17 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
 Baltimore 8pm
 R&R over MX non title JC in Cage \$75,000
 18 OFF
 19 Fayetteville, N.C.

MX over Dusty & TA NAWWTTC \$11,000
 20 Rock Hill, S.C.
 Dusty & TA over MX DQ WTTC 2/3 falls \$30,000
 Rock Hill, barely 15 miles down the Interstate
 from downtown Charlotte, drew almost 4,000 fans
 paying \$30,000 for this spot show at the college arena
 21 Taylorsville, N.C.
 R&R over MX non title \$13,698
 22 San Antonio, Tx.
 MX over R&R NAWWTTC \$53,000
 23 Columbia, S.C.
 Condrey over Todd Champion
 Gibson over Eaton (JC in cage) \$19,700
 24 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
 Cincinatti 8pm
 MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$46,000
 25 Cleveland, Oh.
 MX over DCOR Warriors NAWWTTC \$32,000
 26 Greenville, S.C.
 MX over Bull & Hector NAWWTTC \$16,700
 27 Greenwood, S.C. TV
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ WTTC \$9,500
 Also at this TV, JC introduced his bodyguard,
 Big Bubba Rogers. Ray Traylor had been a TV job
 guy with about 6 matches as a pro, when in an Atlanta
 TV match, he took a slingshot suplex from 210 pound
 Tully Blanchard. Dusty figured a guy 6'6" and 350
 pounds who could do that had a future in the business.
 He took Ray off TV for 3 months, and debuted him on
 this night in a dark suit as the "baddest man in the
 world" who was sent by Mama Cornette from
 Louisville to protect her son.
 Bubba Rogers never spoke, sold nothing and
 never cracked a smile, but if anyone touched JC, he
 destroyed them. JC added the idea that he enter the
 ring to the theme from the "Peter Gunn" TV show for
 his matches, and that rounded out his whole "organ-
 ized crime enforcer" vibe. Bubba accompanied JC to
 the ring in almost every match from this point on,
 which helped him with on-the-job training, and helped
 JC as by this point, he NEEDED a bodyguard from
 the fans.
 28 Raleigh, N.C.
 MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$24,000
 29 Amelia, Va. R&R over MX non title
 30 Hampton, Va.
 R&R over MX non title (JC in Cage) \$37,500
 31 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
 Florence, S.C. 8pm
 MX over Garvin & Bull DQ NAWWTTC \$12,000

JUNE 1986

- 1 Charleston, W.Va. 2pm
MX over Bull & Garvin DQ NAWWTTC \$44,700
- Greensboro, N.C. 8pm
James Gang over MX (Bunkhouse Match) \$61,000
- 2 Greenup, Ky.
MX over Bull & Hector NAWWTTC \$14,000
- 3 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes
- 4 Raleigh, N.C.
Garvin & Wahoo McDaniel over MX DQ \$11,600
- 5 Columbus, Ga.
MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$18,000
- 6 Norfolk, Va.
James Boys over MX (Bunkhouse Match) \$35,000
- 7 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Roanoke, Va. 8pm
MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$26,000
- 8 Asheville, N.C. 2PM
MX over Bull & Hector NAWWTTC \$16,000
Atlanta Omni 8pm
James Boys over MX (Bunkhouse Match) \$51,000
- 9 Greenville, S.C.
James Boys over MX (Bunkhouse Match) \$24,000
- 10 Salisbury, N.C. TV 2 tapes \$18,000
- 11 Mission, Tx.
MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$28,400(SO)
- 12 San Antonio, Tx.
James Boys over MX (Bunkhouse Match)
- 13 OFF
- 14 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Baltimore 8pm
MX over Wahoo & Garvin DQ NAWWTTC \$55,000
- 15 Wilmington, N.C.
MX over R&R 2/3 falls non title \$30,000
Wilmington's Legion Stadium draws a strong crowd of about 4,000 outdoors.
- 16 Greenville, S.C.
Dusty & TA over MX (Lumberjack Match) \$20,000
- 17 Greenwood, S.C. TV 2 tapes

The night that got Bubba Rogers over as a star. Baby Doll invaded JC's "public workout" preparing for their matches at the Great American Bash, and Bubba threw Doll down. Dusty hit the ring with a wooden chair, and smashed it over Bubba's head.

The chair seat exploded into pieces and the frame hung around Bubba's neck, but Bubba never flinched and it didn't even knock his hat off. Bubba calmly removed his hat and the chair, and began unbuttoning his jacket as the American Dream stood speechless, until Magnum TA hit the ring carrying 2

shovels and JC called Bubba off

That image convinced the fans Bubba was indeed the baddest man in the world. After the match, Dusty congratulated ring man Klondike Bill for gimmicking the chair to break that way, and Bill slapped his head and said, "Gee, I forgot!!")

- 18 Raleigh, N.C.
MX over Wahoo & Garvin DQ NAWWTTC \$21,000
- 19 Hillsville, Va. MX over Bull & Hector non title
- 20 Richmond, Va.
James Gang over MX (Bunkhouse Match) \$41,000
- 21 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Norfolk, Va. 8pm
MX over Dusty & TA DQ NAWWTTC \$58,000
- 22 Atlanta Omni 2pm
Dusty & TA over MX DQ Lumberjack \$33,000
Greensboro 8pm
Dusty & TA over MX Lumberjack \$53,000
- 23 Fayetteville, N.C. 2 tapes
At this point, JC was assigned to do color commentary on both syndicated TV's, NWA Pro and NWA Worldwide Wrestling, a position he held on many of the shows through the summer.
- 24 Rock Hill, S.C. TV
MX over Road Warriors DQ DARK \$16,000
- 25 OFF
- 26 Laurinburg, N.C. R&R over MX non title \$26,000
- 27 Columbia, S.C. James Boys over MX Bunkhouse
- 28 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Albuquerque, N.M. 8pm
Dusty & TA over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$46,000
- 29 Gainesville, Ga. 2pm
Wahoo & Garvin over MX DQ WTTC
(JC off due to travel time from New Mexico. wrestlers took Crockett jet)
Marietta, Ga. 8pm
MX over Wahoo & Garvin NAWWTTC
- 30 Buckingham, Va.
MX over Bull & Hector non title

THE BASH GOES ON TOUR

It was now time for the most ambitious tour ever mounted by the NWA and Jim Crockett Promotions--the Great American Bash 1986. The Bash in 1985 had been a stand-alone event at Charlotte's Memorial Stadium, headlined by Flair defending the NWA Title against Nikita Koloff in a USA vs. Russia storyline out of Rocky 4, before a crowd of over 25,000. That event convinced Dusty and Crockett to launch an entire tour, including booking large outdoor

stadiums, for the 86 Bash. The events were loaded lineups with all the NWA programs reaching their culminations, Flair defending the NWA Title against every top babyface in the area, and country-western stars like Waylon Jennings, David Allen Coe, George Jones and others giving concerts before the matches

Not all July events were Bash events--those that were are listed, but business for the company in almost all cities was strong due to the interest generated by the publicity for the tour.

JULY 1986

1 PHILADELPHIA--VETERAN'S STADIUM--BASH

R&R & Baby Doll over MX & JC \$215,000(REC)

Right off the bat, the gate for the Philly Bash has been the subject of debate for many years. With floor tickets at \$50 and all others \$20, both Flair and JC estimated the crowd by eyeballing it at over 15,000--it definitely wouldn't have fit in the Philly Civic Center, the 12,000 seat indoor arena the company ran regularly. Promoter Elliott Murnick reported \$215,000, and for the first time in the MX's tenure in JCP, the top talent was openly hot about the figure reported.

2 OFF--PHILLY RAIN DATE

3 WASHINGTON, D.C.-RFK STADIUM-BASH

R&R over MX

Baby Doll over JC in 5:00 match \$135,000(REC)

4 MEMPHIS, TN-LIBERTY BOWL-BASH

Dusty, TA & Baby Doll over MX & JC CAGE

The lowest-drawing Bash event, in the shadow of the Memphis Mid-South Coliseum where Jerry Lawler was King and Jerry Jarrett still ran a successful local promotion, this ill-advised date on the tour drew roughly 1,000 fans, and the gate was not recorded.

5 CHARLOTTE, N.C.

--MEMORIAL STADIUM-BASH

Dusty, TA & Baby Doll over MX & JC CAGE
\$234,000

When the match was over, Bubba Rogers called Dusty Rhodes out to the floor, and the MX locked TA & Doll in the cage as Bubba beat Dusty bloody--since Bubba was green, Dusty told him to lay it in to make it look good, and fans in the 5th row could hear the sound of Bubba's fist bouncing repeatedly off Dusty's skull.

This event, headlined by Ricky Morton's classic challenge against Ric Flair for the NWA Title and the MX

cage match, drew an estimated 20,000 fans, the second-largest crowd in North Carolina wrestling history 6 Raleigh, N.C

Warriors over MX DQ NWAWTTC \$74,000(SO)

Not a Bash event but still a loaded lineup, this event sold out the Dorton Arena and set an all-time Raleigh gate record

7 Greenville, S.C. (MX OFF)

Baby Doll over JC \$43,000(REC)

8 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes \$11,000 (SO)

9 CINCINNATI, OH.

--RIVERFRONT STADIUM--BASH

R&R & Baby Doll over MX & JC \$78,000

This event was also a disappointment--rain all day killed any walkup, and Cincy didn't buy into the George Jones concert as a Southern City would--final total was about 3500 fans.

10 CHARLESTON, W.VA.

--CIVIC CENTER--BASH

Gibson over Condrey Bunkhouse Match

TA & Baby Doll over Eaton & JC \$113,500(REC)

(This event set an all time gate record for the state of West Virginia.)

11 ROANOKE, VA. --CIVIC CENTER--BASH

Gibson over Condrey Bunkhouse Match

Dusty & Baby Doll over Eaton & JC \$72,000(REC)

(The gate record for the city of Roanoke)

12 JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

--THE GATOR BOWL--BASH

R&R over MX w/JC in Cage

Doll over JC 5:00 \$113,000(REC)

13 San Antonio, Tx.

Warriors over MX DQ NWAWTTC \$23,600

14 Wilmington, N.C.

Dusty & TA over MX non title \$39,000(SO)

(This event sold out the outdoor Legion Stadium with about 5,000 fans, also setting a city gate record.)

15 Gaffney, S.C. TV 2 tapes

Dusty & TA over MX non title \$17,800(SO)

(This TV taping, headlined by the above tag title dark match, sold out and set a city gate record IN ADVANCE at least 2 days before the show)

16 OFF

17 Columbia, S.C. TV

MX over Dusty & TA DQ NWAWTTC \$28,000(SO)

(With the tour in full swing, Atlanta TBS TV was taped on the road at the Township Auditorium with this dark match main event.)

18 RICHMOND, VA.

--RICHMOND COLISEUM--BASH

Dusty, TA & Doll over MX & JC CAGE

\$115,000(REC)

(The Bash headlined by the above main event drew an all-time gate record for the state of Virginia, which would last for a week.)

19 Baltimore, Md.

Warriors over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$106,000

(House show draws about 10,000 paying \$106,000)

20 Greenville, S.C.

TA & Doll over Eaton & JC \$62,000(SO)

(This event drew a sellout 6,000 paying \$62,000 to break the all-time gate record set two weeks earlier.)

21 FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.

--CUMBERLAND COUNTY ARENA--BASH

Dusty, TA & Doll over MX & JC CAGE

(Another Bash main event for the MX, another sellout and all-time city gate record.)

22 Greenwood, S C TV 2 tapes

23 JOHNSON CITY, TN.

--FREEDOM HALL--BASH

Dusty, TA & Doll over MX & JC CAGE

\$101,000(SO)

(Another main event, sellout of 6,000+, and all-time city record)

24 OFF

25 NORFOLK, VA.--SCOPE COLISEUM--BASH

R&R & Baby Doll over MX & JC \$157,000(REC)

(Underneath Flair-Dusty, this event broke the all-time state of Virginia gate record set by the MX & JC vs. Dusty, TA & Doll Cage match in Richmond the week before)

1986 Great American Bash



JIM CROCKETT PROMOTIONS, INC.

421 Briarbend Drive/Charlotte, N.C. 28209

TO: JIM CORNETTE

FROM: JAMES A. CROCKETT



Please find enclosed your check for the 1986 GREAT AMERICAN BASH the amount of \$17,320. This includes all the July dates and the August 2 Bash in Atlanta.

Since we did not pay July on a normal basis, we have calculated previous July earnings. Added with the enclosed Bash check your for the entire month is \$22,960.

Should you have any questions, see me.

Warm Thanks From Jimmy Crockett Accompanied Our Bash Paycheck

JIM CROCKETT PROMOTIONS, INC.			
7/03/86	WASH	DC	LICENSE
8/01/86	BASH	NC	TALENT FEE
GROSS AMOUNT			
LESS DEDUCTIONS			

8/06/86 6089

26 GREENSBORO, N.C.

--GREENSBORO COLISEUM--BASH

Warriors & Baby Doll over MX & JC CAGE

\$257,000

(Semi-final match on the Bash card that drew over 13,000 fans and set the non-Starrcade city gate record.)

27 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Dallas, Tx. 8pm

MX drew R&R 20:00

\$95,000

The first Crockett event in Reunion Arena drew almost 10,000 fans in the home base of the now-in-decline Von Erich's World Class Wrestling--JC's notes indicate this match was especially hot from an in-ring AND fan perspective, with the MX struggling to return to the dressing room.

28 Wilmington, N.C.

MX over Dusty & TA DQ

\$15,900

(2 weeks after a sellout in the Legion Stadium, another strong crowd of almost 2,000 for this event)

29 Rock Hill, S.C. TV 2 tapes

30 Raleigh, N.C.

MX over Wahoo & Garvin NAWWTTC

31 Columbia, S.C. Condrey drew Garvin 30:00

TA & Doll over Eaton & JC \$16,000

AUGUST 1986

1 San Antonio, Tx.

R&R & Doll over MX & JC

\$12,700

(An ill-advised return only 3 weeks after the previous show drew a poor crowd.)

2 ATLANTA, GA.

--FULTON COUNTY STADIUM--BASH

Road Warriors & Doll over MX & JC CAGE

\$185,000

(Not performing to expectations but still drawing almost 10,000 fans, the final Bash event in Atlanta set a non-Starrcade city gate record with this semi-final underneath a Flair Title defense.)

The 1986 Great American Bash tour finished with these numbers on the board--14 Bash events grossing over \$1,900,000, with 9 gate records set and 2 sellouts. Non-Bash events in the month drew about \$575,000, with 4 gate records set and 6 sellouts, for a month's total of \$2,500,000 gross, 13 gate records and 8 sellouts for 30 events. The MX & JC earned \$22,960 EACH for the month of July alone, so Vince McMahon was starting to seem much less important.

Speaking of compensation, on the contractual

front, things were looking up for the Express and JC there as well. Their May visit to Connecticut had reached the ear of Jim Crockett, who had promptly offered them the first contract they had ever signed with a wrestling promoter--a 3 year deal for a minimum of \$100,000 per year no matter what the houses or their spot on the card, with a one week, all-expenses-paid vacation to the destination of their choosing

The MX were making twice as much as their guarantee at that point, but the long-term security, and annual vacations, made them a lot more comfortable, since they were still not 3 years removed from some \$300 weeks in Memphis where they could have been given two weeks' notice at any time.

These contracts were signed on June 20, 1986, and coming out of the Bash tour, the MX were prepared for another run with the Rock & Roll, and the biggest one night payday of their lives to come with the Road Warriors.

3 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes

4-7 OFF

8 Richmond, Va.

Wahoo over Condrey, Eaton over Warlord \$30,000

9 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

St. Louis 8pm

TA & Doll & D. Murdoch over MX & JC \$65,000

10 Asheville, N.C.

Warlord over Bubba DQ

MX drew Kansas Jayhawks 20:00 \$43,000

(Jayhawks were Dutch Mantell & Bobby

Jagers)

11 Greenville, S.C.

MX drew R&R 45:00 NAWWTTC \$32,000

12 OFF

13 Raleigh, N.C.

MX over R&R NAWWTTC \$53,000

14 Albany, Ga.

MX over Garvin & Bull DQ NAWWTTC

15 Hays, N.C. MX over Bull & Hector

16 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Philadelphia 8pm

R&R OVER MX TO WIN NAWWTTC \$60,000

(After a 7 month, uninterrupted reign as NWA World Tag Team Champions, the MX lost the belts back to the R&R in a barnburner at the Philly Civic Center before about 7000 fans.)

17 Huntington, W.Va. 2pm

Dusty, TA & Doll over JC & MX CAGE \$44,000

Charlotte 8pm

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$99,300(SO)

(Another Charlotte sellout of just under 12,000 fans)
18 Fayetteville, N.C.

R&R over MX DQ NWA WTTC \$21,800

19 OFF

20 Indianapolis, In.—State Fair

R&R over MX NWA WTTC \$80,000

21 Cincinnati, Oh.—MX over Dusty & TA DQ \$24,000

22 Hampton, Va.

Wahoo & Bull over MX DQ

Dusty over Bubba CAGE \$41,000

(The first Dusty-Bubba match was the main

28 Los Angeles, Ca

R&R over MX NWA WTTC \$100,000

(The NWA debut in the beautiful LA Forum in Inglewood, CA., one of the most famous arenas in the country, draws nearly 10,000 paying \$100,000—after the show, JC & the MX go to dinner with JC's friend Steve Hirsch, head of Vivid Video, and Vivid contract girls Ginger Lynn and Jamie Summers, which causes Tully Blanchard no end of consternation)

29 Macon, Ga. (MXOFF)

Bubba DCOR Warlord Street Fight \$20,000



Animal Gives JC A Lift



"Bobby, You Start!"

event before over 5,000 fans, Ray Traylor had probably had fewer than 10 matches.)

23 Cleveland, Oh.

Warriors & Ellering over MX & JC

Dusty over Bubba CAGE \$42,000

24 Asheville, N.C. 2pm

Wahoo over Eaton

Condrey over Warlord \$18,000

Roanoke, Va. 8pm

Dusty over Bubba CAGE

MX over Bull & Hector \$15,000

25 Greenville, S.C.

R&R over MX DQ NWA WTTC 2-3 falls

26 Rock Hill, S.C. TV—2 tapes

27 OFF

30 ATLANTA TBS TV—2 tapes

Greensboro, N.C. 8pm

Bubba over Warlord COR Street Fight

Wahoo & Murdoch over MX DQ \$88,000

31 ATLANTA TBS TV—2 tapes

Atlanta Omni 3pm (MXOFF)

Dusty over Bubba CAGE \$52,000

Charlotte, N.C. 8pm

R&R over MX WTTC (revdec)

Dusty over Bubba Street Fight CAGE \$95,800

(An incredible TRIPLE shot with Atlanta TV from 9AM-1PM, Omni matinee and Charlotte evening, made possible BARELY by Crockett's private planes, and seeing Bubba vs. Dusty main event two shows drawing a total of 15,000 fans paying

almost \$150,000. The MX & JC & Bubba earned almost \$3000 for just two days work.)

SEPTEMBER 1986

- 1 Fayetteville, N.C.
MX over Jayhawks
Dusty over Bubba Street Fight \$14,200
- 2 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 Tapes
- 3 Raleigh, N.C.
MX over Jayhawks
Dusty over Bubba CAGE \$27,000
- 4 Albany, Ga.
Bubba over Warlord COR
Wahoo & Garvin over MX DQ \$10,000
- 5 Richmond, Va.
MX over Jayhawks
Dusty over Bubba CAGE \$42,000
- 6 Philadelphia, Pa.
Wahoo & Murdoch over MX DQ \$40,000
- 7 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Marietta, Ga. 8PM
R&R over MX NAWWTTC
Dusty over Bubba Street Fight COR \$20,600(SO)
- 8 Wallace, S.C. R&R over MX non title \$15,000
- 9 Columbia, S.C TV MX over Jayhawks
- 10 OFF
- 11 Norfolk, Va.
R&R over MX 2/3 falls NAWWTTC
Dusty over Bubba S. Fight COR \$43,000
- 12 Charleston, W.Va.
R&R & Murdoch over MX & Bubba \$26,000
- 13 Charlotte, N.C.
Dusty & R&R over MX & Bubba \$67,000
- 14 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Cleveland, OH. 8pm
R&R over MX NAWWTTC
- 15-17 NWA CONVENTION IN LAS VEGAS
As a perk, Crockett flew all the top talent, all expenses paid, to Vegas for the NWA's Annual Convention. One ten-minute meeting was held, then everyone was on vacation for three days. The pattern would be repeated the next year in St. Maarten.
- 18 Green Bay, Wi. R&R over MX WTTC \$29,000
- 19 Bloomington, Mn.
R&R over MX NWA WTTC \$49,000
- 20 Greensboro, N.C.
Dusty over Bubba COR Street Fight \$67,000
- 21 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Charlotte, N.C. 8pm

- MX over Jayhawks \$28,000
- 22 Saginaw, Mich.
R&R over MX NAWWTTC \$16,000
- 23 Lansing, Mich.
R&R over MX 2/3 falls NAWWTTC
- 24 Grand Rapids, Mich. MX over Jayhawks \$22,000
- 25 Columbia, S.C. MX over Jayhawks
- 26 Norfolk, Va. MX over Jayhawks
- 27 Macon, Ga. TV 2 tapes
- 28 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Atlanta Omni 8pm
MX drew Murdoch & Garvin 20:00 \$35,000
(In a one night tourney for the US Tag Title, both teams were eliminated by the draw.)
- 29 Wichita, Ks. R&R over MX NAWWTTC \$18,000
- 30 Rock Hill, S.C. TV MX over Jayhawks

OCTOBER 1986

- 1-2 OFF
- 3 Hampton, Va. MX drew Jayhawks 20:00
- 4 Albany, Ga. Jayhawks over MX DQ
- 5 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Roanoke, Va. 8pm
Morton & Brad Armstrong over MX DQ
(Robert Gibson out with a minor injury for the next few weeks.)
- 6 Fayetteville, N.C. Jayhawks over MX
- 7 Spartanburg, S.C TV 2 tapes
- 8 Lenoir, N.C. Morton & Brad over MX \$15,200(SO)
- 9 Raleigh, N.C. Jayhawks over MX Bunkhouse
- 10 Norfolk, Va. Wahoo over Eaton DQ \$29,000
- 11 Greensboro, N.C.
Morton & Brad over MX DQ \$45,000
- 12 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Cincinnati, Oh. 8pm Jayhawks over MX
- 13 Greenville, S.C. Jayhawks over MX Bunkhouse
- 14 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes
Jayhawks over MX DARK
- 15 OFF
- 16 Cambridge, Md.
Morton & Brad Armstrong over MX \$14,100
- 17 Richmond, Va. MX over Jayhawks \$37,000
- 18 Philadelphia, Pa.
MX over Tim Horner & D. Kernodle \$63,000
- 19 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Charlotte 8pm
Jayhawks over MX Lumberjack
- 20 Fayetteville, N.C. Jayhawks over MX
- 21 Greenwood, S.C. TV 2 tapes
(At this TV, the Scaffold Match between the

Almost 12,000 Fans Paid \$110,000 At The Gate To See This All Star NWA Lineup

CIVIC ARENA • FRI., OCT. 24, 8 PM

TICKETS: \$12.00-\$10.00-\$8.00 ON SALE AT: CIVIC ARENA, GATE #1 AND CHOICE SEAT LOCATIONS

FOR N. W. A. WORLD'S CHAMPIONSHIP



**NATURE
BOY**

RIC FLAIR

• VERSUS •

DUSTY RHODES



**FOR N. W. A. WORLD'S TAG TITLE
ROCK 'N ROLL EXPRESS**

• VERSUS •

OLE & ARN ANDERSON



FOR N. W. A. UNITED STATES TITLE

**NIKITA
KOLOFF**

V
S

**MAGNUM
T.A.**



**MIDNIGHT
EXPRESS**

with JIM CORNETTE
• VERSUS •

**DICK MURDOCH &
RONNIE GARVIN**

TIM HORNER vs. RICK RUDE



WANOO McDANIEL

• VERSUS •

TULLY BLANCHARD

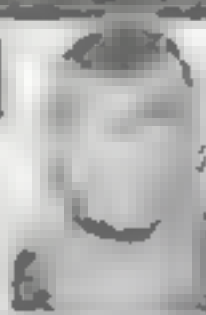
with JAMES J. DILLON



JIMMY GARVIN

with PRECIOUS
• VERSUS •

BRAD ARMSTRONG



MX and Road Warriors was announced as the feature match for Starrcade '86.)

22 OFF

23 Sumter, S.C. MX over Jayhawks \$8,800

24 Pittsburgh, Pa.

MX drew Murdoch & Garvin 20:00 \$110,000

25 Greensboro

R&R over MX WTTC CAGE \$44,000

26 Atlanta Omni 8pm

R&R & Wahoo over MX & Bubba \$35,000

27 Misenheimer, N.C. MX over Jayhawks

28 Rock Hill, S.C. TV 2 tapes

29 Boone, N.C. Jayhawks over MX DQ

30-31 OFF

NOVEMBER 1986

1 Philadelphia, Pa.

MX & Bubba over Jayhawks & Garvin

2 Atlanta TBS TV 2 tapes

Omaha, Neb. 8PM

R&R over MX NWA WTTC

\$20,000

3 Greenville, S.C.

R&R & Armstrong over MX & Bubba DQ \$13,440

4 Spartanburg TV 2 tapes

R&R & Dusty over MX & Bubba DQ DARK \$10,000

5 Canton, Oh. R&R over MX non title \$12,400

6 Raleigh, N.C.

MX & Bubba over R&R & Garvin \$26,000

7 Roanoke, Va.

R&R & Valiant over MX & Bubba DQ

8 Charlotte, N.C.

MX & Bubba over R&R & Armstrong \$85,000

9 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Cincinnati, Oh. 8pm

R&R & Brad over MX & Bubba DQ \$48,000

10 Greenville, S.C.

MX over Armstrong & Horner

Bubba over Morton Street Fight \$11,500

11 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes

R&R & Brad over MX & Bubba DQ \$16,300

12 OFF

13 Norfolk, Va.

R&R & Brad over MX & Bubba DQ \$21,000

14 Washington, D.C

Animal & Ellering over MX DQ \$58,000

Several weeks before, an angle had been shot on Atlanta TV where the MX "injured" the Road Warriors, so that they could go on a tour of Japan. They shot promos before they left plugging the Starrcade '86 Scaffold match.

In Japan, Hawk was injured, breaking a bone in his leg. On their return, to give him extra recuperation time, manager Paul Ellering replaced him in matches booked as the Warriors vs. MX.

15 Huntington, W.Va.

Animal & Ellering over MX DQ \$34,000

16 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Johnson City, Tn. 8pm

Animal & Ellering over MX DQ \$32,000

17 Fayetteville, N.C.

R&R & Brad over MX & Bubba DQ \$13,400

18 Lansing, Mich. Animal & Ellering over MX DQ

19 Green Bay, Wi.

R&R & Brad over MX & Bubba DQ \$11,000

20 Grand Rapids, Mich.

Animal & Ellering over Eaton & Bubba \$11,400

(Condrey now out with minor injury as well)

21 Saginaw, Mich.

Brad over Bubba DQ Animal over Eaton

22 Baltimore, Md.

Animal & Ellering over MX DQ \$131,000(SO)

(This event at the Baltimore Civic Center drew a sellout 13,000 fans.)

23 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Asheville, N.C. 8pm

MX & Bubba over Jayhawks & Kernodle

24 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes

25 Spartanburg, S.C.

R&R & Brad over MX & Bubba \$11,000

26 OFF

27

STARRCADE '86

NIGHT OF THE SKYWALKERS

ATLANTA GA. & GREENSBORO, N.C.

Bubba Rogers over Ron Garvin

in a Louisville Street Fight

Road Warriors over Midnight Express

in a Skywalker Scaffold Match

THE MATCH: JC remembers, "Two days before Starrcade, Dusty had a meeting with all the top talent

concerning the Starrcade main events. Obviously, the MX was going to lose to the Warriors. But his idea was that after the finish, they would chase me up the scaffold, and I would take a bump off as well, to make the fans forget that the Express had lost

He said, "Bubba and the Express are all in the ring, JC, you're hanging there. And you just kick your feet up, baby, and drop, and they catch you like they catch the cheerleaders at the football games, and nobody remembers the Express lost at all!"

"Well, we got to the Omni that afternoon, and looked at the scaffold. It was 24 feet off the floor. 21 feet above the mat. I told the boys that the University of Alabama football team couldn't have caught me coming off that thing; it would have killed all of us. So we came up with plan B--I would drop with my arms spread out, Bubba would get under me to partially break the fall with his arms, and we would drop and roll to the side like the paratroopers do. I knew I was going to hurt something, the only question was how bad, but the team was in need and this was the biggest show of all time."

"On the undercard, Bubba beat Garvin in the street fight. Then, it was time. We went to the ring knowing this was the biggest match we'd ever had. Hawk, showing what a tough SOB he was, went up that scaffold with a brace under his boot on the broken lower leg bone he had suffered in Japan, but at least the Warriors knew THEY weren't taking the bump, unless something happened, which it easily could have.

It was the worst big show match the MX ever had, which was because history has shown you can't really have a good match up there, because you can't do much, but as scaffold matches go it was great and put the gimmick on the national map. Dennis finally took the bump, and ONLY ended up feeling like he'd been hit by a car. Bobby took the bump and sprained his ankle. Then, Hawk and Ellering chased me up to the top."

"Trapped in the middle, I dropped to the scaffold and reached underneath to grab the ladder. Animal, bless him, grabbed my leg and held me until I got my grip. As we had arranged, when I yelled "Let me go", he did, and I hung there swinging for a few seconds, then let go. Time stood still, and the wind whishing by me sounded like a freight train, but watching the video back it looked like I defied the law of gravity and fell like I'd been shot from a cannon. I fell so fast, Bubba completely missed me, and I hit

JIM CROCKETT PROMOTIONS, INC. PRESENTS

STARRCADE '86

"THE SKY-WALKERS"

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1986 • 8:00 PM

N.W.A. WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

RIC FLAIR

vs.

NIKITA KOLOFF

N.W.A. WORLD TELEVISION CHAMPIONSHIP

"First Blood Match"

DUSTY RHODES

vs.

TULLY BLANCHARD

(with J. J. Dillon)

THE NIGHT OF THE SKY-WALKERS

"On A Scaffold 20 ft. Above the Ring"

THE ROAD WARRIORS

vs.

THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

(with Paul Ellering)

(with Jim Comette)

N.W.A. WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

"In A Steel Cage"

ROCK 'N ROLL EXPRESS

vs.

OLE & ARN ANDERSON

HAIR VS HAIR

"The Hair of Paul Jones" vs. "The Hair of Big Mama"

JIMMY VALIANT

vs.

PAUL JONES

(with Big Mama)

vs.

(With Ragin' Bull)

The Ragin' Bull will be locked in a small cage and held high above the ring during the match.

INDIAN STRAP MATCH

WAHOO McDANIEL

vs.

RICK RUDE

(With Paul Jones)

LOUISVILLE STREET FIGHT

RON GARVIN

vs.

BIG BUBBA

(with Jim Comette)

BRAD ARMSTRONG

vs.

GORGEOUS JIMMY GARVIN

(With Precious)

UNITED STATES TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

"No Disqualification"

IVAN KOLOFF

vs.

THE KANSAS JAYHAWKS

KRUSHER KRUSHCHEV

SPECIAL GRUDGE MATCH

BARON VON RASCHKE

vs.

THE BARBARIAN

HECTOR GUERRERO

SHASKA

CENTRAL STATES HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

SAM HOUSTON

vs.

"SUPER STAR"

BILL DUNDEE

TIM HORNER

vs.

DON KERNODLE

NELSON ROYAL

ROCKY KERNODLE

(Matches Subject to Change)

like a cow turd. I felt my leg bend sideways the wrong way, but thankfully, my head snapped back into Bubba's knee and knocked me out for a few seconds, serving as a natural anesthetic. I came to my senses expecting to see a bone sticking out of my leg, but it wasn't, so I begged Bubba in a soprano voice to carry me, and they all helped me out of there. The fans were throwing babies in the air, and we took off."

"Once back in the locker room, shock set in, and I actually walked to the car and drove to my hotel, put an ice pack on my knee, and went to sleep knowing we had just done SOMETHING people were going to remember, just not exactly what."

THE GATE: The scaffold match was booked third from the top, underneath Nikita Koloff vs. Ric Flair for the NWA Title and Tully Blanchard vs. Dusty Rhodes in a First Blood Match, but it was the feature

attraction and what the event was named after. It can be considered a main event as well. The event was a sellout of 16,000 fans paying \$307,000 at the Greensboro Coliseum, with an additional several thousand paying \$70,000 at the Coliseum annex for the closed circuit broadcast. There were less than 100 free tickets out for the show.

This all-time record stood for 12 years, until April 26, 1998, when a WWE Pay Per View event in Greensboro drew 21,427 paying \$341,270 in the Coliseum, but that was after extensive renovations increased the seating capacity by 5,000, and if you include the closed circuit audience the record still stands.

In the Atlanta Omni, where half the matches, including the scaffold, were held, about 15,000 paid \$300,000 to set the all time gate record there. Closed

JIM CROCKETT PROMOTIONS, INC.		000220	JIM CORNETTE		
DATE	INVOICE NO.		REFERENCE	AMOUNT	
11/14/84		GVILLE	SC	TALENT FEE	
11/25/84		SPT	SC	TALENT FEE	145.00
11/27/84		STARR	NC	TALENT FEE	
11/30/84			TRANSFERS MAGNUM		-25.00
GROSS AMOUNT					
LESS DEDUCTION					



circuit locations in other cities were Columbia, S.C. selling out at \$35,000, Kansas City doing \$32,000, Charleston, W.Va. doing \$33,000, and locations in Jacksonville, Fla., Cincinnati, Norfolk, Charlotte, Albany, Ga. and others bringing the total gate to just over \$1,000,000, making it the first million dollar gate in NWA history, and third biggest of all time behind the first two Wrestlemanias.

The video tape, the first NWA tape to be released in conjunction with Turner Home Entertainment, was the first pro wrestling video in history to go gold with sales of over 50,000 units. It is a safe estimate that in this pre-PPV era, over 60,000 fans left their homes on Thanksgiving night to see Starrcade '86 either live or on the big screens.

THE FALLOUT: JC woke up the next day with a knee 3 times it's normal size and unable to walk. He returned to Charlotte and underwent surgery the following day for a torn anterior cruciate ligament and extensive cartilage damage. In those days, an ACL repair would have meant 6 months out of work, so he opted for a cleanup by arthroscopic procedure, and to this day has no ACL and only 1/3 of the cartilage in his right knee. The MX continued on the road, and the shows were drawing some huge houses in major markets coming off the Starrcade buzz, until JC returned for the big weekend preceding the Christmas break.

They wouldn't know for months, even years, that the Starrcade '86 match would be the most-watched match they would ever participate in. Thanks to the video tape, the commercials for the video that played on every TBS broadcast for months, the release by WWE of the Road Warriors and Starrcade DVD's and inclusion of the scaffold match in its entirety, and the overall interest in the event over the past 20 years, this match was seen by more fans than anything else the Express has ever done.

JC's bump has been seen and replayed more times than any bump in pro wrestling history except Mick Foley's hip toss off the top of the Hell In A Cell by the Undertaker in 1998. Coincidentally, the Hell In A Cell concept was proposed to Vince McMahon in 1996 by JC, while a member of the WWF creative team. The results of MX matches from November 28 to December 11 are incomplete due to JC's recovery from surgery, but the cities, opponents, and gates are listed where known.

28 Richmond, Va.

MX & Bubba vs. Warriors & Ellering

29 Bloomington, Mn

Bubba vs. Tim Horner, MX vs. Warriors

30 Peoria, IL. MX & Bubba vs. Warriors & Ellering

DECEMBER 1986

1 Fayetteville, N.C.

Bubba vs. Garvin, Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal

2 Rock Hill, S.C. TV Bubba vs. Garvin Street Fight

3 Raleigh, N.C. Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal

4 Columbus, Ga. MX & Bubba vs. R&R & Garvin

5 Hampton, Va.

Bubba vs. Garvin Street Fight

Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal

6 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Cleveland, Oh. 8pm

Bubba vs. Murdoch, MX vs. Warriors Scaffold Match

★★★ **NWA WRESTLING** ★★★

BUNKHOUSE STAMPEDE

\$50,000 — 25 MAN

OVER-THE-TOP-ROPE BATTLE ROYAL

★★ *PLUS* ★★

Special Challenge Matches
DUSTY RHODES & NIKITA KOLOFF
 VS
RIC FLAIR & TULLY BLANCHARD
THE ROAD WARRIORS
 VS
THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

Join the Pre-Match Party 1:30 PM at
 the Horizon & New Skyline Hall and meet
 your favorite wrestlers including
 Jimmy Valiant, Baron Von Raschke,
 Rock & Roll Express and Road Warrior

SUNDAY, DEC. 14—7:30 PM—TICKETS: \$15/\$12/\$9

Watch NWA Pro Wrestling every Sunday at 7:00 pm on WGN-TV 9
 Watch World Wide Wrestling every Saturday at 10:00 am on WGN-TV 9

Tickets available at Horizon Box Office
 11-7 Mon-Fri, Noon-5 Sat., and at
 Ticket Centers

To Charge Tickets to VISA or MasterCard
 312/559-1212 Mon-Fri 8:30 am-10 pm
 Sat. 8:30 am-9 pm Sun. 9 am-6 pm

**ROSEMONI
HORIZON**

Over 13,000 Fans Paid \$150,000 For The NWA TV Debut In Chicago

7 Des Moines, Ia. Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal
8 Saginaw, Mich.

Bubba vs. Garvin Street Fight

MX vs. Brad Armstrong & Tim Horner

9 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes

10 Asheville, N.C. Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal

11 Norfolk, Va.

Bubba vs. Garvin Street Fight

Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal

After 14 days off following surgery, JC

returned to the road on crutches to make the weekend before the Christmas break. This was not totally out of duty, as in those days, injured or not, if you didn't work, you didn't get paid, and this weekend included the important Baltimore-Philly double shot and Crockett's debut at the Rosemont Horizon in Chicago.

12 Charlotte, N.C. TV

Bubba over Garvin Street Fight

Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal \$80,000

(Almost 9,000 paid \$80,000 for this event that doubled as a syndicated TV taping)

13 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes 10am

Baltimore 3pm

Bubba over Garvin Street Fight

Warriors over MX

Bunkhouse Stampede \$107,000

Philadelphia 8pm

Warriors & Dusty over MX & Bubba

Bunkhouse Stampede \$110,000

14 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes 10am

Chicago, IL 8pm

Warriors over MX

Bunkhouse Stampede \$150,000

Crockett's planes really came in handy this weekend, when the MX worked, including the Stampede Battle Royals, 7 house show matches and 4 TV matches in 3 days--Philly drew 10,000 fans, Baltimore almost 10,000, and the NWA debut in Chicago at the Rosemont Horizon about 12,500. The 3 day weekend grossed almost \$450,000 and almost 42,000 fans, with the MX and JC earning about \$4,500 each for 3 days' work.

JC remembers the Warriors had goose bumps coming to the ring in their gimmick hometown of Chicago, and the MX as a result took one of the classic ass-whippings of all time.

15 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes

Bubba won Bunkhouse Stampede DARK

16-24 CHRISTMAS BREAK

25 Greenville, S.C. 3pm

MX & Ivan Koloff over Jayhawks & Garvin

(This event drew 3566 fans paying \$10,700 at \$3.00 fan appreciation night prices--Bubba was off with an injury from the Chicago event)

Atlanta Omni 8pm

Murdoch over Eaton

MX over Armstrong & Horner \$80,000

(This event drew about 16,000 fans paying \$5 each.)

26 Richmond, Va. Warriors over MX

Bunkhouse Stampede \$78,000

27 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Minneapolis, Minn. 8pm

Warriors & Dusty over MX & Jim Garvin

Bunkhouse Stampede \$46,000

28 Greensboro, N.C. 2pm

Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal

Albuquerque, N.M. 8pm

Warriors over MX

Bunkhouse Stampede \$52,000

The most insane double-shot in history--the wrestlers flew Crockett's jet from Greensboro to Albuquerque, but JC & J.J. Dillon were stuck flying commercial through Chicago and crossing two time zones--JC, without even changing clothes between events, arrived in New Mexico and the arena during the intermission before the MX match went to the ring.

29 Los Angeles, Ca. Warriors over MX DQ

Bunkhouse Stampede \$75,000

30 San Francisco, Ca. Warriors over MX DQ

Bunkhouse Stampede \$80,000(SO)

31 OFF

The boys finished 1986 working 8 house shows and 1 TV taping in 6 days, with a total of about 60,000 fans paying around \$525,000, and the MX & JC earning around \$5,000 each for the tour.

Charlotte and Greensboro, N.C. were probably the two biggest-drawing wrestling cities per capita in the U.S. in 1986. For 12 events at the Coliseum and one at the Stadium, Charlotte drew roughly 125,000 paid admissions totalling almost \$1.2 million

In 14 events at the Greensboro Coliseum, including only the live attendance and gate for Starcade, Greensboro drew well over 125,000 paying over \$1.4 million.

In all, almost 100 NWA live events were held in North Carolina in 1986, and they grossed in excess of \$3.5 million on an estimated 400,000 tickets sold

JIM CROCKETT PROMOTIONS, INC.		000220	JIM CROCKETT
12/13/86	ATL TV		TALENT FEE
12/14/86	LAKE	PA	TALENT FEE
12/14/86	PHIL	PA	TALENT FEE 2
12/14/86	ATL TV	GA	TALENT FEE
12/14/86	CHICAGO	IL	TALENT FEE
12/15/86	GREENVILLE		TRANSFER MAGNUS
			TALENT FEE
			GROSS AMOUNT
			LESS DEDUCTIONS

1987-- A Change Is Gonna Come

JANUARY 1987

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Atlanta Omni
 Warriors & Ellering over MX & Bubba
 Bubba won Bunkhouse Stampede
 7 days after drawing 16,000 paying \$80,000,
 the return to the Omni at regular ticket prices saw
 almost 6,000 pay \$55,000 for the Bunkhouse
 Stampede, and Bubba Rogers return from the injured
 list to win another Stampede victory.</p> <p>2 Johnson City, Tn. Bunkhouse Stampede \$45,400</p> <p>3 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
 Amarillo, Tx. 8PM
 Warriors over MX \$57,000</p> <p>4 Huntington, W.Va. 2PM
 Warriors over MX Scaffold \$40,000
 Cincinnati, Oh. 8PM
 Eaton over Baron Von Raschke
 Bubba over Garvin
 Bunkhouse Stampede \$62,000</p> <p>5 Baltimore, Md.
 Bubba over Ricky Gibson
 MX over Murdoch & Garvin \$38,000
 (Fan appreciation in Baltimore, 7600 fans pay-
 ing \$38,000 at \$5 each)</p> <p>6 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes</p> <p>7 OFF</p> <p>8 Raleigh, N.C. MX over Murdoch & Garvin</p> <p>9 Norfolk, Va.
 R&R & B. Windham over MX & Bubba DQ \$46,000</p> <p>10 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
 Philadelphia 8PM
 Warriors over MX SCAFFOLD \$161,000(REC)
 (This main event in Philly sold out the Civic
 Center drawing an indoor record of over 12,000 pay-
 ing \$161,000 at increased prices.)</p> | <p>11 Charlotte, N.C. 2PM
 R&R & Garvin over MX & Bubba \$65,000
 Atlanta, OMNI 8PM
 Warriors & Dusty over MX & Bubba</p> <p>12 Greenville, S.C.
 Warriors & Dusty over MX & Bubba \$24,000</p> <p>13 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes</p> <p>14 Grand Rapids, Mich.
 MX & Bubba over Warriors & Von Raschke \$21,000</p> <p>15 Marquette, Mich.
 MX & Bubba over Warriors & V. Raschke \$27,000</p> <p>16 Hollywood, Fla.
 Warriors over MX SCAFFOLD \$33,000</p> <p>17 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
 Greensboro, N.C. 8PM
 Warriors & Dusty over MX & Bubba \$75,100</p> <p>18 OFF</p> <p>19 Chesterfield, S.C. Bubba DCOR Murdoch
 MX over Garvin & Von Raschke \$10,400(SO)</p> <p>20 Fayetteville, N.C. TV 2 tapes</p> <p>21 Jacksonville, Fla.
 Warriors & Dusty over MX & Bubba \$68,000
 (All-time indoor gate record 7,044 fans)</p> <p>22 Washington, D.C.-CANCELLED-SNOWSTORM</p> <p>23 Norfolk, Va.
 Warriors & Dusty over MX & Bubba \$62,000</p> <p>24 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
 Richmond, Va. 8pm
 R&R & Windham over MX & Bubba \$88,000
 Washington, D.C. 8:30pm
 Warriors over MX SCAFFOLD \$44,000
 A ridiculous night--the Washington show at the
 DC Armory had been cancelled on the 22nd due to a
 snowstorm. It was rescheduled for the 24th with an
 MX-Warriors scaffold match as the main event.</p> |
|--|---|

Two separate cards were booked but the MX & Dusty were on both. A private plane took them straight out of the Richmond event, where they were on early, 120 miles north to Washington, where the prelims were told to run long.

The taxi driver taking the MX & JC to the Armory was an Arab who spoke little English, and he got lost on the way to the arena. JC had to get on the cab's radio to the dispatcher to get directions, and the MX forcefully commandeered the cab to get to the arena.

The driver got stiffed on the trip and almost beaten up by Dennis Condrey, and the Express arrived in time to go to the ring and lose the scaffold match to the Warriors by 11:50PM, just in time to avert a complete riot by the 5,000 fans in attendance who had endured a series of prelims and a one hour intermission.

25 OFF

26 Greenville, S.C. MX over Armstrong & Horner

27 Rock Hill, S.C. TV 2 tapes

R&R & Murdoch over MX & Bubba

28 Odessa, Tx. Warriors & Dusty over MX & Bubba

29 Los Angeles, Ca.

Bubba over Garvin street fight

Warriors over MX SCAFFOLD \$55,000

The bloom was off the rose in Los Angeles, where a meager crowd of about 5,000 paid \$55,000 for Crockett's latest venture to the City of Angels.

30 St. Louis, Mo.

MX & Bubba over Garvin, Stallion & Champion

31 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Kansas City, Ks. 8pm

Batten Twins over MX DQ

Murdoch over Bubba Barbed Wire \$8100

Crockett had just purchased the struggling Central States promotion and was attempting to breathe life into it's cities, but this card featuring a few TBS stars augmenting the Central States regulars fell short of the mark.

FEBRUARY 1987

1 Atlanta Omni Gibson & Garvin over MX \$50,000

2 Bassett, Va. Bubba DCOR Garvin

R&R over MX \$10,000

3 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes

4 Kenansville, N.C.

Garvin & Horner over Bubba & Condrey \$8,372

5 Harrisonburg, Va.

Garvin & Bob Armstrong over MX \$13,000(SO)

6 Baltimore, Md.

Warriors & Dusty over MX & Bubba CAGE \$107,000

7 Greensboro, N.C.

Windham & Garvin over MX USTTC \$122,000

(This event, with MX challenging Barry Windham & Ronnie Garvin for the United States Tag Title on the undercard of a stacked lineup, drew about 12,000 fans.)

8 Cincinatti, Oh.

Garvin, Wahoo & Murdoch over MX & JC \$37,000

9 Greenville, S.C. MX over Jayhawks

Bubba over Garvin Lumberjack

10 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes \$16,600

11 Marion, N.C.

Garvin & Windham over MX USTTC \$10,000

12 OFF

13 Columbus, Ga.

Garvin & Windham over MX USTTC

14 Charlotte, N.C. TV

Windham & Garvin over MX DQ USTTC \$81,000

This Charlotte event drew over 8,000 paying \$81,000 and doubled as a TV taping. Challenging for the USTTC, the MX were DQ'd when JC threw a fireball in Garvin's face. The angle, designed simply to give the NWA a reason to suspend JC for two weeks so he could get married and go on a honeymoon to Hawaii, took on a life of its own.

JC recalls, "Garvin told me to make it look good, and I was nervous anyway since it was the first time I had thrown fire. The time came, and when I rolled into the ring, I threw a fireball right into his face. It was huge, and it engulfed his head. He went down, and the TV slo-mo replays showed that it stuck to him, and was still burning when he hit the mat. It burned his eyebrows off, all his nose hair out and scorched his whole face. His head literally smoked for 15 seconds."

"Panic ensued, we bailed out and fought our way to the locker room, when his brother Jimmy Garvin hit the ring. Jimmy had been a heel for a year there, and he and Ronnie hadn't spoken. Jimmy left the ring, ran to the back, and kicked the dressing room door down and tackled me. All the heels pulled him off, and he ran to the parking lot, where the other faces had taken Ronnie, thrown him in the car, and Jimmy drove him to the hospital."

"The NWA suspended me, and I went to Hawaii. When I returned, I started to realize the full impact of what we had done. I had death threats in the mail. The tapes had replayed over and over for two



We reserve the right to change the order of events. (PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE) The promoter is not responsible if contestants fail to appear in the ring because of conditions beyond our control. Whenever possible a substitute will be arranged for a wrestler who is unable to appear. Championship matches are sanctioned by the National Wrestling Alliance.

[illegible]



JC Returns From Hawaii And Schiavone Gets "Lei'd" On National TV

weeks. Totally unexpectedly, this was one of the hottest, no pun intended, things we had ever done. People were clamoring for rematches and for my hide, and Dusty made plans to capitalize by booking me in cage matches with Garvin, where even I feared for my life."

15-25 No records as even though the MX continued on the road every night, JC kept no notes as he was in Hawaii on the first real full-length vacation he had taken in over 4 years.

26 Minneapolis, Minn.

Jimmy Garvin over Bubba Street Fight (MX off)
27 Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dusty over Bubba CAGE \$165,000(SO)

This was the Bunkhouse Stampede finals, where the two men who had won the most Bunkhouse Battle Royals, Dusty & Bubba, battled in a cage for the Bronze boot and an advertised \$100,000 prize. JC had scheduled his trip to return in time for this event, which drew an eye-popping sellout at the Civic Arena of 16,600 fans paying \$165,000, shattering all NWA OR WWF records in the city, and although the gate record has since been broken, this remains the most

people ever to see a wrestling match in the city of Pittsburgh.

Being driven out to the airport by JC's long-time friend Brian Hildebrand (WCW referee Mark Curtis) and his father, JC & Bubba were mobbed by angry fans who blocked the car, and Brian's father, a Pittsburgh Police officer, had to draw his gun to clear the path for them to speed away against traffic.)

28 Atlanta TBS 2 tapes

Kingsport, Tn. 8pm R&R over MX

MARCH 1987

1 Richmond, Va. 2PM

J. Garvin over Bubba COR

Eaton drew Valiant 15:00

\$77,000

Atlanta Omni 8PM J. Garvin over Eaton

\$52,000

2 Greenville, S.C.

Mike Rotunda over Condrey DQ

J. Garvin over Eaton

3 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes

4 Birmingham, Al.

Garvins & Bob Armstrong over MX & Bubba

5 Memphis, Tn. Garvins over MX

While the MX worked Memphis, JC flew to Baltimore this day to shoot promos for the upcoming Crockett Cup Tag Tourney

6 Morganton, N.C. Garvins over MX \$10,000(SO)

7 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Norfolk, Va. 8pm Eaton drew Horner 20:00

J. Garvin over Eaton \$50,000

8 Greenville, S.C

Garvins & Windham over MX & Bubba

9 Fayetteville, N.C. TV 2 tapes

10 Greenwood, S.C. Garvins over MX \$7500

11 Thomasville, N.C. R. Garvin over Eaton

Brad Armstrong over Condrey

12 Raleigh, N.C. Garvins over MX

Bubba over Armstrong COR \$10,200

13 Washington, D.C. Wahoo over Bubba DQ

R. Garvin over Eaton

J. Garvin over Condrey DQ \$30,000

14 ATLANTA TBS TV

Greensboro, N.C. 8PM

Condrey over Von Raschke

J. Garvin over Eaton

Ole Anderson over Bubba DQ \$130,000

(This Greensboro event with the MX & Bubba

in singles matches underneath a classic Flair-

Windham NWA Title match drew an unexpected sell-out of 15,000+ paying \$130,000.)

15 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Minneapolis, Mn. 8PM

J. Garvin over Eaton

Dusty over Bubba CAGE \$25,000

16 Lenoir, N.C. Garvins over MX

17 China Grove, N.C. TV 2 tapes

18 Las Cruces, N.M.

Garvins & Wahoo over MX & Bubba \$37,000

19 Los Angeles, Ca.

*Some Call Him
The
Gangster Of Love*



Garvins over MX

Animal over Bubba COR \$32,000

(LA continued its decline as only 3,000 came to the LA Forum for this event--for whatever reason, LA was one of the few top 10 markets totally rejecting NWA style wrestling in favor of "sports entertainment".)

20 Albuquerque, N.M.

Garvins over MX

Dusty over Bubba CAGE \$37,000

21 Cincinnati, Oh.

Garvins over MX

Ole Anderson over Bubba CAGE \$28,000

22 Houston, Tx.

Garvins over MX Bunkhouse \$15,000

A horribly disappointing house in the Summit Arena in the city of some of the MX's record houses reflected not only the economic recession in the area but the rejection of any event in the city not promoted by Houston legend Paul Boesch.

23 Fayetteville, N.C

Brad Armstrong over Condrey DQ

R. Garvin over Eaton

J. Garvin over Bubba DQ \$12,800

24 Lincolnton, N.C. Garvins over MX \$7,000

He Pulled That Ol'Houdini

The Midnight Express was presented with the biggest crisis of their careers on March 25, 1987 when Dennis Condrey failed to show up at the Charlotte airport that morning for a commercial flight to San Francisco. "Bobby, Bubba and I were there waiting", Cornette remembers, "and finally we had to board the flight. At first, we figured he'd had car trouble, maybe even a wreck, but even though it was unusual for any of us to miss flights or no show, it wasn't unheard of, especially early in the morning. But after calling his house and he wasn't there, wasn't rebooked on a later flight, didn't show up at the arena that night, and nobody had heard from him, we knew something was up, we just didn't know what."

"After a few days, it was obvious he was gone. The longest any of us had been out of contact with each other in over 3 years was a few days, and then, we always knew where each other was. The last thing he had said to us when he dropped us off at home after the spot show on the 24th was, "See you in the morning". We didn't see him again for a year and a half."

Eaton and Bubba carried on as a team that week filling the Express bookings, but by that Saturday at Atlanta TV Dusty came to Bobby and I to adopt a plan B. The Express was heavily figured into upcoming booking, and there needed to be an Express to execute those plans.

"Dusty basically said if Dennis shows up quick, we'll go right along as planned, but if he doesn't, and it was looking like that was the case, we need a replacement just as quick." Cornette said. "With that ultimatum, my mind was spinning with the very short list of anybody in the business who could fill his spot. I watched tapes at that time of just about every territory in the business except WWF, and I suggested Tom Prichard, who was doing great work in Alabama. Dusty said he would think about it and meet with us back in Charlotte that week."

"By Wednesday, he called us into the office, and there sat Stan Lane. Of course, Bobby and I had both known Stan for years, and truthfully the only reason I had not thought of him was because he and Steve Keirn had been hugely successful as a team for the previous 5 years. What I didn't know was that at that time, Keirn was looking at getting out of wrestling and going into real estate, and Stan had been working mostly singles in Florida for a few months."

"Since Crockett was in the process of buying the Florida territory, which was having trouble since Eddie Graham's death, he was up-to-the-minute on what was going on there. Stan looked great, was a tag team specialist, and we knew we could not only get along in the ring but on the road as well. We all agreed on the spot, and Stan was booked to debut at Atlanta TV the following Saturday."

"To be honest, in the promo where I introduced Stan, I wasn't exactly encouraged to bury Dennis, but it was stated plainly that I had free reign to go as far as I wanted. Also honestly, not knowing what had gone on, we had a stressful 10 days and were ticked off if nothing else. But I never mentioned Dennis' name, cut a promo saying my mother had insisted on a change, and switched gears as quick as I could to talk about how great Stan was. After all we'd been through, neither Bobby or I wanted to leave that period of the team with a big stink, or to have people think badly of Dennis as he was the original member, in truth, of the Express."

"To settle this hopefully once and for all, we ended up hearing much later from Dennis what had happened. On the record, it wasn't drugs. It wasn't

legal trouble. It wasn't heat among the team, or any of the theories that have made the rounds of the internet for years. It was a personal situation that made Dennis decide he needed a clean break, not only from wrestling but from Charlotte and everything else. After the schedule we'd worked for years, that alone would have had most people looking for the door. But it was the right choice for everybody. Dennis moved to Colorado, established a successful riding stable business he owns to this day, and met a wonderful woman he's been married to for nearly 20 years."

"He did come back to wrestling for a short time in late 1988, (see Express vs. Express), but after getting caught up once again in bullshit wrestling politics, he knew he'd made the right choice to step away."

"At one of the first Express reunion events in 2004, he said in answer to a fan question that the only thing he would have done differently was tell Bobby and I first what he was doing. As for the team, what could have been a disaster ended up possibly prolonging our run."

"Stan fit in and gave us a fresh look, brought a new dimension to the team, and sent us in a different direction. The Eaton & Condrey duo drew more money on their own, because we were placed in the position to do so, while the Eaton & Lane combination was handicapped for much of their run by WCW's incompetence. But the Bobby & Stan version, due to the advent of PPV and live TBS specials, was able to have more great broadcast matches against a wider variety of opponents, and was seen by more people as a whole than even when Bobby & Dennis were selling out arenas. It's hard now to imagine what would have happened without the crisis."

25 San Francisco, Ca.

Windham over Bubba COR

J.Garvin over Eaton \$32,000

26 Amarillo, Tx.

R&R over Eaton & Bubba \$23,000

27 Norfolk, Va. J. Garvin over Eaton \$25,000

28 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Philadelphia 8PM

R. Garvin over Eaton CAGE \$55,400

29 Asheville, N.C. 2PM

Ole Anderson over Bubba

J. Garvin over Eaton \$13,000

Charlotte, N.C. 8PM

R.Garvin over Eaton

30 Greenville, S.C.

R. Garvin over Eaton

Ole over Bubba

31 Gastonia, N.C. TV 2 tapes

APRIL 1987

1 Laurinburg, N.C.

Bubba over Armstrong

R. Garvin over Eaton

2 Columbia, S.C. R. Garvin over Eaton

3 Albany, Ga.

Bubba over Bob Armstrong COR

R. Garvin over Eaton

4 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

(Intro Sweet Stan Lane as the new member of the Midnight Express)

Boston, Mass. 8PM

Warriors over MX

Dusty over Bubba CAGE

(The NWA's debut at the Boston Garden drew a strong crowd of over 13,000 paying \$141,000 in a long-time WWF stronghold.)

5 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Atlanta Omni 8PM

MX over R. Garvin & Von Raschke

6 Toccoa, Ga.

R&R & Garvins over MX

Bubba & JC

7 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes

8 OFF

9 Raleigh, N.C.

R&R & Garvins over MX

Bubba & JC

10 BALTIMORE ARENA--

1987 JIM CROCKETT CUP TAG

TEAM TOURNAMENT

1st round--MX drew a bye

2nd round--MX over Garvins COR

Ole Anderson over Bubba CAGE \$111,000

11 BALTIMORE--NIGHT #2

3rd round--MX over Warriors DQ

4th round--Dusty & Nikita over MX \$199,000

This 2 night stand in Baltimore drew 2 strong houses paying a total of \$310,000 for the annual 24 team tournament, headlined the first night by the Ole-Bubba cage match, and the second night by a classic Flair-Windham NWA Title match. The MX were eliminated in the semi-final round by eventual winners Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff.

FRIDAY
BIG BUBBA
VS
OLE ANDERSON

JIM CROCKETT SENIOR MEMORIAL CUP

SATURDAY
RIC FLAIR
VS
BARRY WINDHAM

JAYHAWKS

THUNDERFOOT 1 & 2

RUDE/BULL

BYE

BARBARAN DUNDIE

ROTUNDA/HORNER

NIKITA KOLOFF/RHODES

BYE

WATLEY MANN

VALIANT/LAZAR-TRON

ROAD WARRIORS

BYE

JONES STALLION

GARVINS

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

BYE

RUDE/BULL

N KOLOFF/RHODES

ROAD WARRIORS

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

MULKEYS

BROWN/CHAMPION

BABA TAKAGI

BYE

ROYAL/GRAHAM

FABULOUS ONES

ROCK & ROLL EXPRESS

BYE

ARMSTRONGS

IVAN KOLOFF PETER

A ANDERSON SULLIVAN

BYE

MCJANE VON RASCHKE

MOD SQUAD

BLANCHARD LUGER

BYE

- | | |
|--|---|
| 12 Charlotte, N.C.
Warriors & R. Garvin over MX & Bubba | 28 El Paso, Tx
R&R over MX |
| 13 Marion, Va.
Valiant over Bubba DQ
Garvins over MX \$19,700(SO) | 29 Marion, N.C.
R. Garvin over Lane
J. Garvin over Eaton DQ \$10,000 |
| 14 Salisbury, N.C. TV 2 tapes | 30 Pembroke, N.C. Garvins over MX |
| 15 Charleston, S.C. Bubba over Tim Horner
Garvins over MX | MAY 1987 |
| 16 Athens, Ga. Wahoo, Windham & Garvins over
MX, Bubba & JC \$40,000 | 1 Atlanta Omni MX over Bob & Brad Armstrong |
| 17 Macon, Ga. Garvins over MX \$14,000 | 2 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
(Week 2 USTTC Tournament) |
| 18 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Roanoke, Va. 8PM Garvins over MX \$17,000 | Chattanooga, Tn. 8PM
Armstrong over MX DQ \$41,000 |
| 19 Huntington, W.Va. Brad over Lane DQ
R. Garvin over Eaton Bunkhouse | 3 Charleston, W.Va. 2PM
MX over Armstrongs \$21,000 |
| 20 Greenville, S.C. Bob Armstrong over Bubba DQ
Garvins over MX Bunkhouse | Cincinnati, Oh. 8PM
MX over Armstrongs \$30,000 |
| 21 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes | 4 Greenville, S.C. MX DCOR R&R \$16,000 |
| 22 Los Angeles, Ca. J. Garvin over Eaton DQ
R. Garvin over Lane Taped Fist | 5 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes |
| 23 San Francisco, Ca. Garvins over MX DQ
R. Garvin over Eaton CAGE | 6 Cheraw, S.C. MX over Horner & Von Raschke |
| 24 Columbus, Ga. J. Garvin over Lane | 7 Raleigh, N.C. R&R over MX \$11,600 |
| 25 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
1st day U.S. Tag Title tournament
Greensboro, N.C. 8PM
R. Garvin, Windham & Bob A. over MX & Bubba \$75,000 | 8 Norfolk, Va. R&R over MX \$25,200 |
| 26 Rock Hill, S.C. TV 2 tapes | 9 ATLANTA TBS TV MX over R&R DQ
(This was a United States Tag Title tournament
match in which the MX advanced with a DQ win over
the R&R.)
Charlotte, N.C. 8PM
R. Garvin over JC CAGE MATCH \$69,000
After the burning of Ronnie Garvin and subse-
quent matches between the Garvins and MX, Dusty
booked, apparently just for fun, a singles match |
| 27 Phoenix, Az. R&R over MX \$31,000 | |



between Garvin and JC inside a cage as the main event on this Charlotte card. "I was scared shitless", JC recalls, "not only because I was concerned Ronnie might kill me, but because I was scared it wasn't going to draw 15 cents in Chinese money. There was no Flair, no Dusty, no Road Warriors on the card, and to put it politely the undercard wasn't exactly Charlotte-worthy. But I had several weeks of TV to promo it, begging the promoters to cancel it, asking the fans to write in with petitions to save me from this homicidal maniac, etc. I went to all the radio stations in Charlotte, had the guy who wrote the wrestling column in the Charlotte Observer do a feature, anything I could think of to drum up interest."

"The night of the show, I looked out, and over 7,500 fans had paid almost 70 grand! Obviously they weren't looking for a mat classic, but to see Garvin murder me. Then the challenge became, how do we give that to them, but realistically make it last long enough that they wouldn't feel ripped off? Ronnie was a pro and walked me through the whole thing."

"I came out with my arm in a sling wearing street clothes, with a note from my mother that I had been injured slipping in the shower. After I stirred them up on the mic, and offered Bobby or Stan as substitutes, all the faces came out, attacked the MX and threw me in the cage and locked the door. I started to climb the cage and Ronnie pulled me down, ripping my pants off me in the process. After roughing me up a little, I blinded him with a bag of powder, pulled brass knucks out of my sock and blasted him, and he even bled for me!"

"I stayed on him and he sold like a million dollars just long enough, then made a big comeback, bounced me around the ring and pinned me by choking me like he was trying to kill me and didn't know the referee was counting. The door opened, the Express came in, and in the brawl with everybody, they drug my carcass out."

"The most frightening thing I've ever seen was Ronnie Garvin covered in blood and powder throwing those hands of stone down at me, but he was a complete pro and I never felt a thing, even though it looked like he was dismembering me. I was so proud of drawing a house for my first singles main event as a 'wrestler', until I found out that because it did so well, Dusty booked it THREE MORE TIMES!"

10 OFF

11 Newton, N.C. Garvins over MX \$10,600

12 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes

MX drew R&R 20:00 DARK \$13,000

13 Westminster, S.C. R&R over MX

14 Hartwell, Ga

J. Garvin over Lane DQ

R. Garvin over Eaton

15 Albany, Ga. MX over Armstrongs

16 ATLANTA TBS TV

MX over R Garvin & Windham to WIN USTTC
(Tournament Finals)

Chesterfield, S.C. 8pm

MX over R Garvin & Bob Armstrong

17 Asheville, N.C. 2PM

Lane over Todd Champion

R Garvin over Eaton \$12,100

Daytona Beach, Fla 8PM

R&R over MX non-title \$28,000

18 Fayetteville, N.C.

Garvins over MX non-title

19 Raleigh, N.C. TV 2 tapes

20 Savannah, Ga.

R Garvin & Windham over MX non title \$45,000

21 Salisbury, Md.

Garvin & Windham over MX non title

22 Richmond, Va.

R&R over MX & JC Handicap \$32,000

23 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Columbus, Ga. 8PM

Garvins over MX Bunkhouse non title

24 Chicago, Ill.

R&R over MX 2/3 falls non title \$117,000

After the big debut at the Rosemont Horizon in Chicago in December, the NWA had been shut out of the arena when the WWF got an exclusive lease. Crockett got dates on the UIC Pavillion, a smaller building seating about 10,000, and on this debut they started a string of several sellouts in a row.

25 Greenville, S.C.

MX over Windham & Brad Armstrong USTTC

26 Greenwood, S.C. TV 2 tapes

27 OFF

28 Siler City, N.C.

MX over Stallion & Todd Champion

29 Beckley, W.Va. R&R over MX non title \$22,600

(The MX got a lawsuit here, described in the "Battle of Beckley" chapter)

30 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

Philadelphia 8PM

MX drew Garvin & Windham 30.00 USTTC \$80,000

31 OFF

- 1 OFF
- 2 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes
Garvin & Windham over MX DQ DARK
- 3 OFF
- 4 Raleigh, N.C.
MX over Todd Champion & Stallion
- 5 Richmond, Va.
MX over J Valiant & Lazertron
Ron Garvin over JC CAGE \$46,400
- 6 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape
ST. Petersburg, Fla. 8pm
MX over Tracy Smothers & Steve Armstrong
This was a TV taping for the newly-purchased CWF Championship Wrestling from Florida, and the MX's first match with the Southern Boys. As well, JC sat in on color with Sir Oliver Humperdink.
- 7 Orlando, Fla. (CWF)
MX over Ed Gantner & Ron Simmons USTTC
- 8 Greenville, S.C.
Garvin & Windham over MX DQ USTTC
- 9 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes
Garvin & Windham over MX DQ USTTC \$15,000
- 10 OFF
- 11 Cincinnati, Oh.
MX over Kendall Windham & Stallion
Garvin over JC CAGE \$22,000
- 12 Norfolk, Va.
MX over Kendall & Champion USTTC
Garvin over JC CAGE \$52,000
- 13 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes
Baltimore, Md. 8PM
MX over Southern Boys USTTC \$58,000
- 14 Charlotte, N.C.
R&R over MX NAWTTC \$62,700
- 15 Greenville, S.C.
MX DCOR R. & J. Garvin USTTC
- 16 Fayetteville, N.C. TV 2 tapes
- 17 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Wed. night taping)
- 18 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Thur.)
- 19 Tallahassee, Fla. (CWF)
MX over R. & J. Garvin USTTC \$16,000
- 20 Lakeland, Fla. (CWF)
MX over R. & J. Garvin USTTC
- 21 Greensboro, N.C.
MX Over R. & J. Garvin DQ USTTC
- 22 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes
MX DCOR R. & J. Garvin USTTC DARK
- 23-24 Off
- 25 Macon, Ga.

- R&R over MX DQ NAWTTC \$26,000
- 26 Greenville, N.C.
R. & J. Garvin over MX DQ USTTC
- 27 Philadelphia, Pa.
R&R over MX DQ 2/3 falls NAWTTC
Incredibly, only 7 months after blowing out his right ACL in Atlanta for Starrcade 86, JC suffered the same injury to his left knee at this show. Getting heat on the R&R after the DQ in the 3rd fall, JC kicked Morton and his left foot got trapped in a spot where the ring padding had separated, twisting his knee sideways and snapping the ligament. He flew home the next morning, underwent surgery on the 29th, and with his usual impeccable timing, was out until July 9 missing the first 8 days of the Great American Bash tour. The records for these days are incomplete but details are listed where known.)
- 28 Rock Hill, S.C. TV 2PM
MX vs. R&R NAWTTC DARK
Wilmington, N.C. 8PM
MX vs. R&R NAWTTC \$28,900
- 29 Greenville, S.C.
MX over Valiant & Lazertron \$15,000
- 30 Columbia, S.C. MX vs. Garvins USTTC \$13,000

THE 1987 GREAT AMERICAN BASH ON TOUR

The landscape of pro wrestling was changing rapidly in 1987. The territories were beginning to suffer from the WWF's national expansion and acquisition of key talent from every promotion. It was rapidly becoming obvious that only Crockett's NWA office was going to mount any kind of competition, and to do so, Crockett began expanding at a blistering pace. Too blistering, as would be revealed a year later. In 1986, JCP had acquired the Central States territory, really the smallest of all U.S. areas in both revenue and talent, and after an initial period of running it as a small separate circuit, folded it into the main office.

Bubba Rogers had been sent there for several weeks to get seasoning as a main event player, but was then returned to the Express. The Florida promotion, CWF, was also acquired by JCP after struggling since Eddie Graham's death in 1985, and after an initial run as a separate office, it too, was folded in with JCP retaining some of the key talent and their excellent syndicated TV markets.

Largest of all, Bill Watts' Mid-South territory, now known as the Universal Wrestling Federation, with the third largest syndicated TV network in the sport behind WWF and NWA, was in the process of



being acquired by Crockett for a reported \$4 million after the oil bust in Watts' core territory had stalled his attempts to become the third national player in the game.

Combining all these TV markets actually gave JCP a larger syndication network than WWF, under the marketing umbrella of "The Wrestling Network", and a goal of major revenues from syndicated ad sales across the whole network was starting to be heavily pushed to Jim Crockett. As well, a new technology, still in its infancy, called Pay-Per-View TV, had been put on the map by the tremendous success of Wrestlemania 3 and the Andre the Giant vs. Hulk Hogan dream match, and JCP made plans to enter this area by year's end, with predictions of millions of dollars in revenue in one night. Crockett opened a Dallas office to facilitate these plans as well as the main base in Charlotte, and would move to Texas himself in 1988.

Bubba Rogers, still a main project of Dusty's as a future superstar, would move to Dallas to become UWF World Champion later this year, but once again return to the Express after the UWF circuit was folded into the NWA when the core cities economy and lack of Watts' specific regional promotion of them saw them not support what the fans saw as an "outside group". A lesson was to be learned here about even the most successful territories' fans seeing a promotion as "theirs", and supporting the specific style of wrestling they were educated to, but in these days of lightning expansion, those lessons would come too late.

During all this, the 1987 Bash tour saw one of the biggest talent rosters in the history of the NWA draw some more record houses, and for the MX and JC, they were set to challenge the R&R Express for

the NWA World Tag Title, and defend the U.S. Tag Title against the Road Warriors, the Garvins and others in matches from one end of the US to the other

JULY 1987

- 1 **Lakeland, Fla. --The Civic Center--BASH**
MX vs. R&R NWAWTTC \$40,000
- 2 **Landover, Maryland--The Capitol Centre--BASH**
MX vs. R&R NWAWTTC \$195,000 (REC)
(The NWA debut in a longtime WWF arena draws nearly 15,000 fans and record gate for the NWA in Maryland.)
- 3 **Richmond, Va.--Richmond Coliseum--BASH**
MX vs. R&R 2/3 falls NWAWTTC \$125,000
- 4 **Atlanta, Ga.--The Omni--BASH**
MX vs. R&R NWAWTTC vs. USTTC \$245,000
- 5 **Charleston, W.Va. --Civic Center--BASH**
MX vs. Road Warriors USTTC \$95,000
- 6 **Los Angeles, Ca.--The Forum--BASH**
MX vs. ? \$85,000
- 7 **San Francisco--Civic Arena--BASH**
MX vs. Road Warriors USTTC \$66,000
- 8 **ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes**
- 9 **Cincinnati, Oh.--Cincinnati Gardens--BASH**
R&R over MX NWAWTTC \$63,000

JC returned to the road at this show. "I have to hand it to Jimmy Crockett on this one", JC recalled "He was giving me a payoff for the Bashes even though he didn't have to, as we were pretty close to making our contract minimums for the year already. I got \$1,000 payoffs for Atlanta and Landover, not what I would have made if I'd been there, but pretty good for laying on the couch. But it was killing me missing these houses and matches, so I hobbled back on crutches and did just enough to justify being there. I

had once again just had a cleanup with a scope instead of the repair that would have kept me out for months, so after a week or two back on the road I could get around OK. I finally had that knee reconstructed in 2006, and now it feels worse than the one I've never had fixed.

10 Pittsburgh, Pa.--Civic Arena--BASH

Garvin & Windham over MX DQ USTTC \$142,000

11 Oklahoma City--The Myriad--BASH

Road Warriors over MX Non Title \$54,000

(Shows how badly the old Mid-South cities were hurting when Ok. City did a paltry \$54,000 with a loaded lineup and higher ticket prices than the records set in 1984.)

12 Baltimore, Md. --The Arena--BASH

MX over Freebirds (Hayes & Roberts) USTTC

Ronnie Garvin over Bobby Eaton \$146,000

This show saw the first-ever straight tag match between the MX and the Freebirds, and Eaton fill in for JC in a scheduled single match with Garvin. "I came in on crutches", JC recalls, "and Garvin punched me, I took one bump, stayed down and Bobby, bless him, had the rest of the match for me."

13 West Palm Beach, Fla.--Auditorium--BASH

R&R over MX NAWWTTC \$55,000(REC)

14 Baton Rouge, La.--The Centroplex--BASH

R. Gibson & Brad Armstrong over MX DQ \$23,000

(Ricky Morton suffered a minor injury and missed the next few events.)

15 Little Rock, Ark. Barton Coliseum--BASH

Gibson & Barry Windham over MX DQ

16 Johnson City, Tn.--Freedom Hall--BASH

Garvins over MX DQ USTTC \$72,000

17 Norfolk, Va.--Scope Coliseum--BASH

Garvins over MX DQ USTTC \$180,000(REC)

(This event broke the all-time gate record for the state of Virginia set in Norfolk at the previous year's Bash.)

18 Charlotte, N.C.--Memorial Stadium--BASH

MX over Freebirds (Hayes & Roberts) USTTC \$174,000

(A disappointing but still healthy turnout of around 15,000 for the year's big outdoor event in Charlotte.)

19 Roanoke, Va.--Civic Center--BASH 2PM

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$80,000(REC)

Chicago, Ill.--UIC Pavillion--BASH 8PM

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$136,000(SO)

(A great weekend overall finished with a new gate record in Roanoke and the second consecutive

Chicago sellout in two months, this time with 10,000 paying jacked-up prices. The MX & JC's paychecks for this week were over \$6500 each)

20 Greenville, S.C.--Memorial Auditorium--BASH
R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$70,000 (REC)

21 OFF

22 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Wed. afternoon)
Columbus, Ga. 8PM

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$15,900

23 Dallas, Tx.--Reunion Arena--BASH

Armstrong & Horner over MX DQ UFWWTTC \$72,000

24 Houston, Tx.--The Summit--BASH

MX & Bubba & Black Bart

DCOR R&R & Freebirds \$34,000

25 Philadelphia, Pa.--Civic Center--BASH

R&R over MX non title lumberjack \$150,000

26 Cleveland, Oh. R&R over MX \$50,000

(A non-Bash sold show after a Cleveland Indians game at Municipal Stadium saw JC almost start a riot when he told the fans "The last person the Indians beat was Custer")

27 Fayetteville, N.C.

--Cumberland County Arena--BASH

MX over Barry & Kendall Windham USTTC \$88,000

28 Rock Hill, S.C. MX drew Garvins 30:00 USTTC

29 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

30 Jacksonville, Fla.--The Coliseum--BASH

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC \$92,000

31 Miami, Fla.--The Orange Bowl--BASH

R&R over MX DQ NAWWTTC

The 1987 Bash tour concluded in Miami's Orange Bowl with the 2nd-ever War Games match, Dusty's 10 man, 2 ring cage concept with alternating entrances that is copied in various forms to this day. The first, in the Omni July 4, saw Dusty, Nikita Koloff, the Road Warriors and Paul Ellering face Flaco Tully Blanchard, Am Anderson, Lex Luger and J.J. Dillon, the Horsemen. J.J. suffered a shoulder injury in Atlanta, underwent surgery, and was replaced in Miami by Bubba Rogers under a mask as the War Machine.

Despite some disappointing houses, the MX and JC still earned right at \$20,000 each for the month of July, almost matching their '86 Bash payoffs due to less overhead from fewer stadium shows. Overall business was still strong, but after the Bash blowoffs, other factors would come into play and the houses would experience a sharp decline.

1 New Orleans, La.--The Superdome
Armstrong & Horner over MX UFWWTTC (rev.dec)
\$42,000

Excitement over the Bash tour was certainly
tempered by the attempt to recreate the magic of Bill
Watts' old shows at the Superdome falling flat on its
ass and drawing an embarrassing crowd of less than
3,500 paying only \$42,000--Mid-South Wrestling was
gone forever and the realization of this nearly brought
JC to tears.

2 Huntington, W.Va. 2PM
R&R over MX non title \$34,000

Charlotte, N.C. 8PM
R&R over MX Bunkhouse \$50,000

3 OFF

4 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes

5 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape (Wed. night)

6 OFF

7 St. Louis, Mo.
MX over Garvins DQ USTTC \$67,000

8 Kansas City, Mo.
MX over Freebirds DQ USTTC \$45,000

9 Asheville, N.C. 2PM
R&R over MX 2/3 falls non title

Atlanta, Ga. 8PM
MX drew Freebirds 20:00 \$80,000

10 Buckingham, Va.
Garvins over MX DQ non title \$12,000

11 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes
MX NC Garvins DARK

12 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

(As had been done a few times previously, the
regular TBS TV tapings were moved to Wednesday
nights until year's end.)

13 Raleigh, N.C.
Windham & J Garvin over MX DQ 2/3 falls USTTC

14 Norfolk, Va.
Windham & Nikita over MX DQ USTTC \$70,000

15 Charlotte, N.C.
MX drew Windham & J Garvin 30:00 \$31,000

16 Kingsport, Tn. 2PM
R&R over MX NAWWTTC \$30,000

Chicago, Ill. 8PM
R&R over MX NAWWTTC \$150,000(SO)

(The THIRD consecutive Chicago sellout,
again with raised prices, of 10,000 fans)

17 Denver, Co. R&R over MX non title

19 Fayetteville, N.C. TV 2 tapes
MX over Windham & J. Garvin DARK \$18,300

19 Forest City, N.C.
R.Garvin & Windham over MX DQ USTTC

20 Pennington Gap, Va. MX over Valiant & Lazertron

21 Macon, Ga.
Valiant & J. Garvin over MX DQ 2/3 falls

22 Philadelphia, Pa.
Nikita & Windham over MX DQ USTTC \$48,000

23 Minneapolis, Mn.
R&R over Eaton & Barbarian (Lane off)

24 Weslaco, Tx. R&R over MX non title \$9400

25 Corpus Christi, Tx. R&R over MX non title \$4500

26 Galveston, Tx. R&R over MX non title \$3500

27 Amarillo, Tx.
Armstrong & Horner over MX non title \$17,000

(This tour of Texas was simply a disaster and
the boys kissed the ground when they got back to the
Carolinas.)

28 Hampton, Va. R&R over MX NAWWTTC \$56,000

29 St. Petersburg, Fla.
Warriors over MX non title \$22,000

30 Charlotte, N.C. 2PM
MX DCOR Windham & Nikita USTTC \$83,000

Atlanta, Ga. 8PM
MX DCOR Windham & Hayes USTTC \$56,000

31 Savannah, Ga.
J. Garvin & Valiant over MX DQ USTTC

SEPTEMBER 1987

1 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes

2 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

3 Anderson, S.C.
MX over Randy & Bill Mulkey USTTC

Mulkeymania Is Running Wild!!!

Two young jobbers on Atlanta TV, the Mulkey
Brothers, had become unlikely heroes to the TV audi-
ence over the previous year, for despite their in experi-
ence and less-than-Hoganesque physiques, they took
the hardest bumps and most classic ass-whippings
anyone at the time had ever seen. Getting cheers
despite a won-loss record of 0 for life, JC dubbed the
phenomenon "Mulkeymania", and within weeks the
TBS studio was filled with signs and chants for the
two youngsters.

Dusty not only booked them to challenge the
MX for the USTTC, but gave JC a heart attack when
it was announced the match would take place in their
hometown of Anderson, S.C. JC actually got to promo
this match for weeks on TBS, and the end result was
the night of the match, the tiny 1,500 seat rec center
was packed with over 2,000 fans paying \$17,000.

① 1882 ② 1885 ③ 1885 ④ 2年
 ノージア州アトランタ ⑤ ドル箱
 男爵 ⑥ キロチン・ドロップ ⑦ 無へS
 61年12月現在 ⑧ 学生時代からと
 もかく相場早く、その評判を聞き
 つけ、ノーとオレイのアンダー
 ノーと、その力づくにきたといふ
 お話、エヒノトの持ち主、19
 14年にノースカロライナ州、ヤ
 シ、テにおいて、ノース・リン
 となる。その後、手は離れて、デビ
 ⑨ ノール・ヒノカ、ノーとテ
 タン、ルマで、暴走する。ビ。を
 増ん、い、こともある。1980
 年の夏には、スチ、ブ、カ、ン、の
 ノー、ン、ア、へ、と、控、手、権、を、

取、ともかくクノグやトリオを組むことが好きで、ノーベル・オー
スチンやランディ・ローズと初代
のミッドナイト・エクスプレスを
結成して、いまが最盛
期を歩むヒュー・イー・
ノとジョーンズを担んで
いるロクンロール・

日(に)に情(なさけ)しくも常(とこ)回(かへ)されてし

ボギー・イン

1185211031958年

8月14日テネシー州④ザ・フラン

トップ⑥無
（S 61年12月現在）⑦

学生時代からアマレスとフットボ

試合場でジブシー・ジョーに声を

かけられたことがきっかけでプロ

レス入り。デビュー当時はアマレ

ス・スタイルのテクニックを売り

宅にしたクリーン・ファイターだ

つたが、テネシー一帯に悪名を轟

かせているジミー・ハートに見

ローラーやトミ・リッチを相

にハードな好ファイトもやって

けた。長くミント・アロマカン

再び正統派にＵターンしたが、1984年

にデニス・コンドリに誘われて

ミッドナイトエクスプレスを結成

MSWA (JUN 7) 10:10

「ス・アメリカン・タック選手権」

区に移つてからも、内人宛て書

[illegible]

ジム・コルネット(マネジャー)

● 1802803 ●
七五子子

シーザマンフィス 〇 東京のちのち

訂正
S
日本、日注三・
P

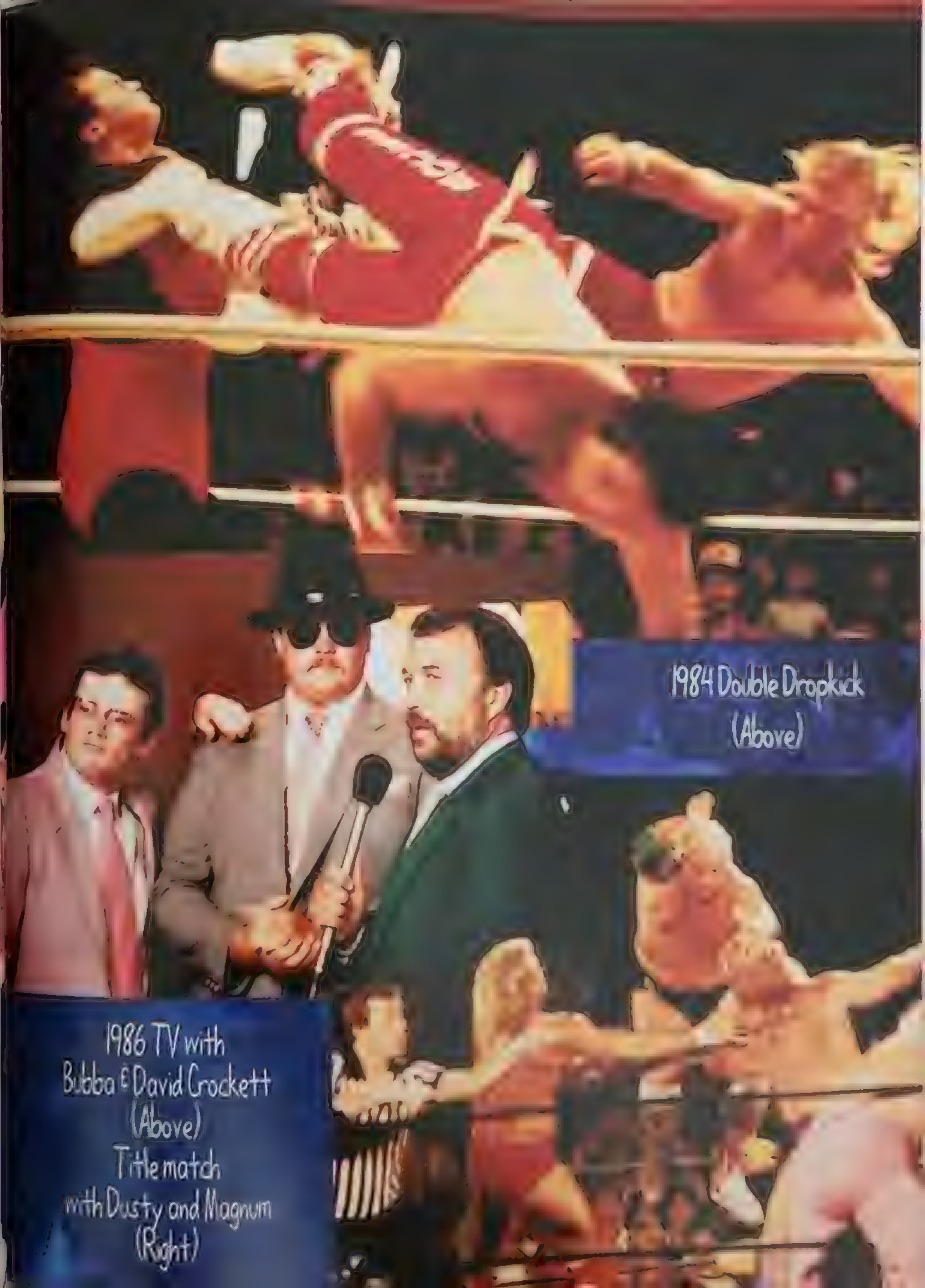
JIM CORNETTE
(manager)



1987 (Above)

1986 (Left)

1984 (Right)



1984 Double Dropkick
(Above)

1986 TV with
Bubba & David Crockett
(Above)
Title match
with Dusty and Magnum
(Right)

THE STAGE

Imagine two of the greatest tag teams in the sport in a match to settle all matches.

The N.W.A. has seen many types of matches. Texas Death, Steel Cage, Handicapped, Bull Ropes, Bunkhouses, but now comes the scaffold.

Twenty feet above the ring. On a single scaffold running 20 feet long, the Road Warriors and the Midnight Express will decide which team can actually "fly higher."

It all began when Comette claimed the Midnight Express was the greatest team in the world, and wanted to prove that fact at the expense of the Road Warriors. A vicious attack ensued, and Comette and "Beautiful" Bobby went on to seriously injure Road Warrior Animal's back.

After the injury, there was a time of rehabilitation, a time of rest needed for the "Warriors." Did that slow down Comette?



The Midnight Express



"Why should the fact that the Road Warriors are washed up, finished, slow me down?" asked Comette. "We will always be known as a team which got rid of the Road Warriors. It's a fact we are proud of, and something I will remind each and every fan of time and time again."

The Road Warriors were not "finished." Comette would make everyone believe they were washed up and trained, and made them better than ever before. They demanded a contract for Starrcade '86 against the Midnight Express, and Comette was more than happy to agree. "Why not," asked Comette. "They want us to beat up on a group of poor cripples. Fine with us." Little did Comette know that the Road Warriors had the biggest surprise yet to come.

An oversight on the part of Comette. Something he has been doing a lot of. He allowed the contract to be signed with the Road Warriors. This, as you will imagine, made Comette nothing short of a fool.

Starrcade '86

WALKERS

"It is well publicized that I have a morbid fear of heights," says Comette. "So, tell me, what can I do? How can I give advice to my men?" Comette's worries are the least of the Road Warriors' concerns. "We have heard a lot about the high flying Beautiful Bobby," says Animal. "Well, now he'll get a chance to prove just how high up he can go. I don't think he'll be able to go that high, . . . seeing how we will already be 20 feet in the air. But, I'll guarantee that he'll be able to fall a long way."

To win the match, one team must be thrown off the scaffold onto the ring. Not just one man, but both men. It is going to pose a problem for both teams. Not only are they going to have to rely on wrestling ability, but balance will become a main concern. A main concern for both teams.

"You get a queasy feeling when you climb up on that scaffold," says Hawk. "The Road



vs The Road Warriors



Warriors are prepared, but the Midnight Express may not be. This is the 'Night of the Skywalkers,' and we plan on making it the worst night in the life of Wimpy Comette and the Pretty Boy Express."

The claims of Beautiful Bobby being the



"highest flyer" in Wrestling will be put to the test during Starrcade. Jimi Comette and his search for the "missing" Road Warriors has come to an end. He now knows where to find them. All he will have to do is look up. . . into the sky.

Fun with The Road Warriors







How Far Will Jim Cornette Go?

BY TONY SCHIAVONE

The actions of Jim Cornette have "graced" our airwaves since the summer of 1985. Sometimes we look at him and laugh. How can a guy who is such a wimp make so much money and get away with all he does?

Sometimes we refuse to look at him at all. Many people get up and walk out when he comes on T.V. They detest his very sight.

Basically, he makes all of us mad at one time or the other. However, on February 14, 1987, he pulled one of the lowest deeds ever in the sport of wrestling. That night he threw a "fire ball" in the face of Ron Garvin.

Many things led up to that event. Continued threats by Cornette directed toward Garvin. Weeks before, the Midnight Express tried to virtually break Garvin's neck. However, we were only seeing a sample of things to come. The fire ball incident was proof that Cornette not only wanted Garvin out of wrestling, but out of the human race as well.

During our T.V. shows, I refuse to get into a running argument with Cornette. I don't think it is my place, or is it proper. My job is to call the action. However, this article enables me to vent my opinion.

"The time has come where we need to put an end to all these 'antics' by Cornette."

The time has come where we need to put an end to all these "antics" by Cornette. There is nothing I nor, actually, the NWA can do. I am powerless and the Cornette family is rich enough to ward off any fines the NWA.

Justice has to be taken care of by the athletes themselves. I think Ron Garvin and Jim Crockett should be commended for arranging a cage match against Cornette. That, however, is only the first step. The only thing that will stop Cornette is to beat down his men. When he finds himself alone without Big Bubba, Bobby and Dennis, then he will truly be in trouble.

Yes, the cage will help, but remember Cornette's men will be in the building. Can he ban them from the building? It is this that should be looked into, also.

The night of Ron Garvin vs Jim Cornette in a cage should be an event that everyone will want to see. I'm sure Garvin will find it long and difficult for Cornette that night. However, let this be just the beginning. Let's start to end the actions of Jim Cornette. A guileless wimp if ever there was one in the sport.

Jim C - Too Bad you are
not a Religious man maybe
You would understand the
Purgatory you placed all
four of you in - you also
took what I say from three
fine athletes - Too Bad your
mothers money will not
help you. I dont think
you can go far enough
out of the Country with
out Paying for your Sins

Western Union Mailgram

DEAR MR CROCKET,
I APPEALED TO YOU ON BEHALF OF JIM CORNETT LEGIONS OF FANS NOT TO
ALLOW RON GARVIN TO BRUTALIZE MR CORNETT IN A STEEL CAGE. IN THE NAME
OF ALL THAT IS DECENT PLEASE DONOT ALLOW THE ONLY TRUE GENIUS OF
WRESLING TO PERISH, GOD BLESS JIM CORNETT.
THANK YOU.
PS PLEASE FORWARD THIS LETTER AFTER YOU READ IT TO MR CORNETT, SO
THAT HE MAY REST ASSURE THAT EVERYONE IS BEHIND HIM.
LOVE JIMMYE
187 HOLLYWOOD CA 90044



TBS Clash of Champions 1
March 27, 1988
Greensboro, N.C.
VS. The Fantastics



Original Midnight Express
AWA World Champions
with Paul E.
(Right)



The Aftermath of Paul E's TBS Attack (Left)

Double-teaming Road Warrior Hawk (Below)

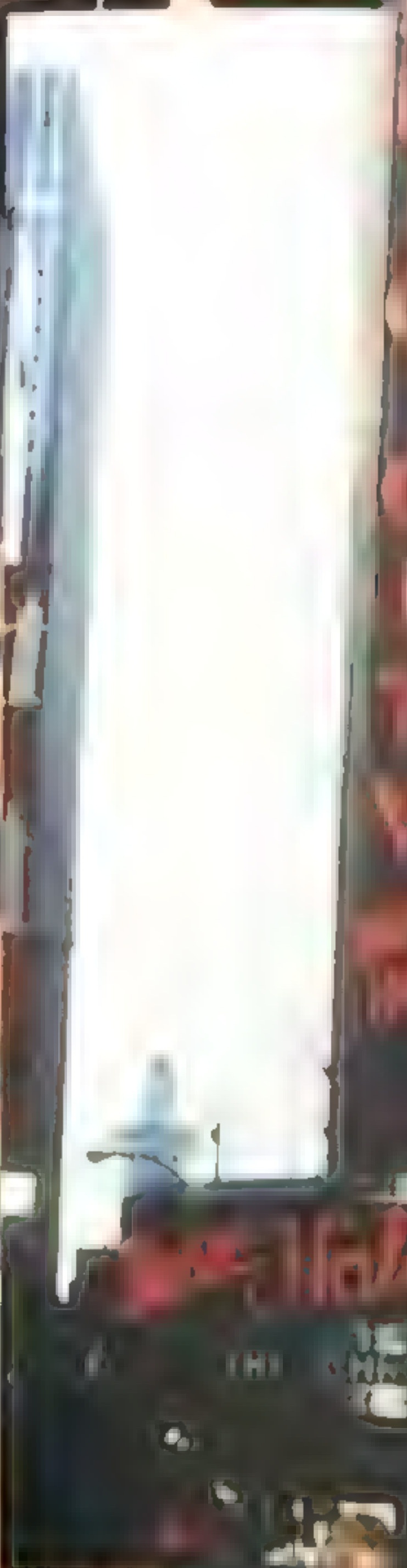


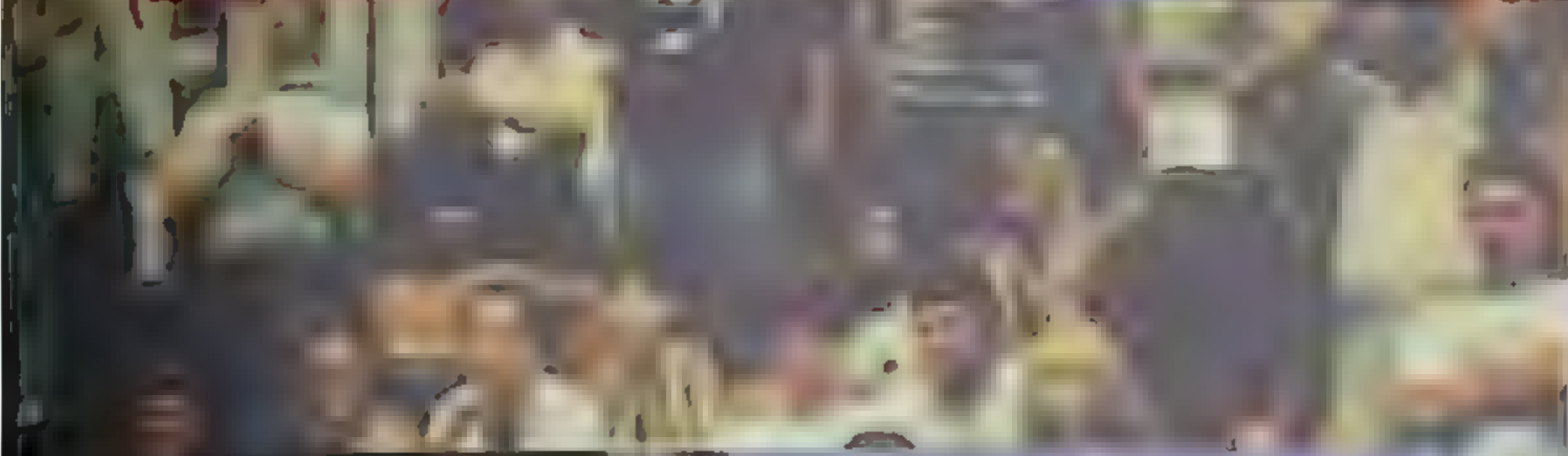
Arn Anderson has a seat
(Above)





NBC Studios
New York
(Above & Left,
Radio City
Music Hall
(Right)
Dinner at
Saborino's
in Baltimore's
Little Italy







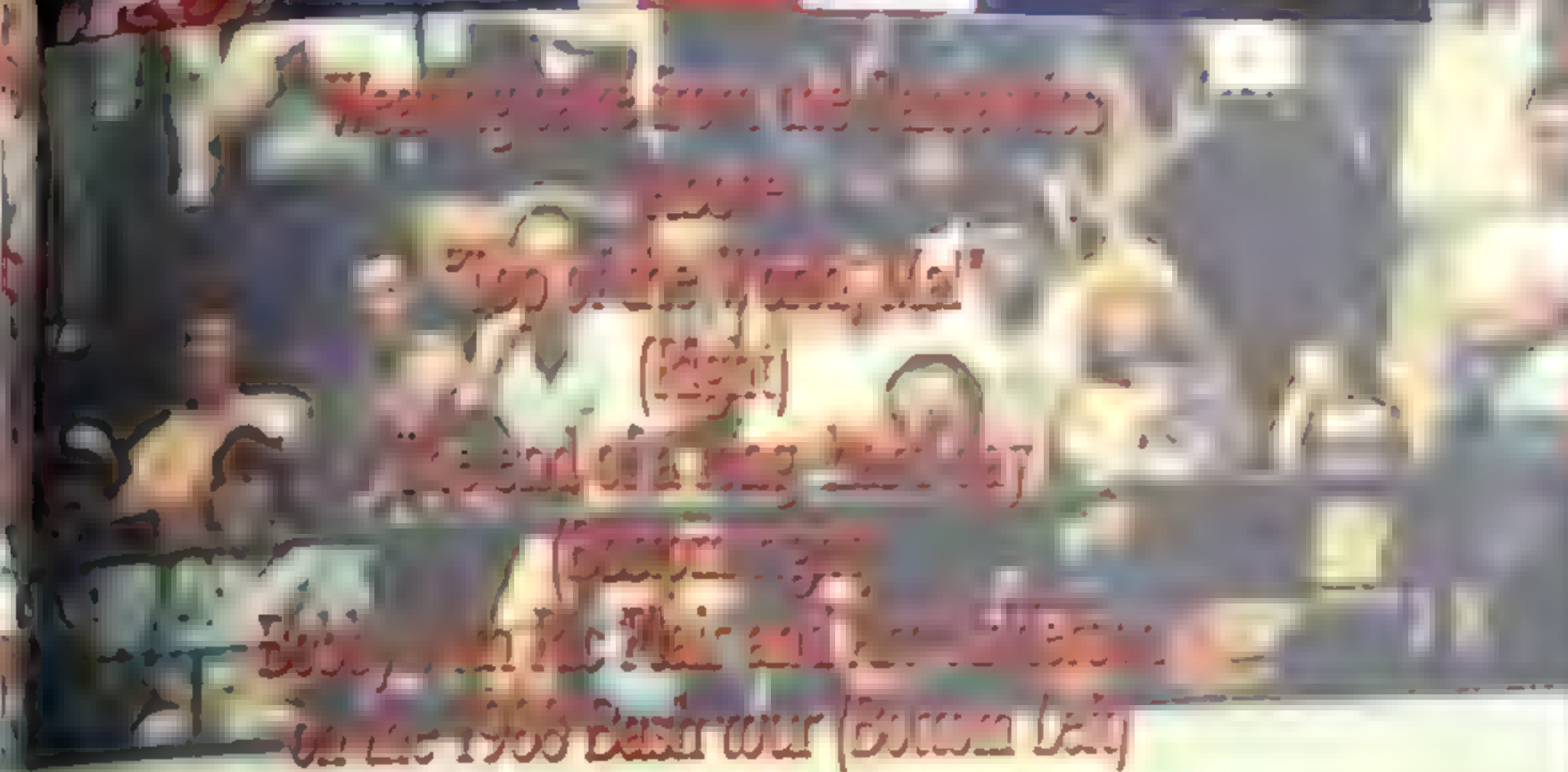
With Vivid Video Girls
Jamie Summers, Ginger Lynn, and Lori Sanders
(Above)

With Phillip Bailey and Maurice White of Earth Wind & Fire
(Left)

With Dusty Hill and Frank Beard of ZZ Top
(Bottom)

Bobby with Unidentified Relative
(Bottom Left)





Wearing out from the dance into

"Top of the World, Ma!"

(Right)

The end of a long hard day

(Bottom Right)

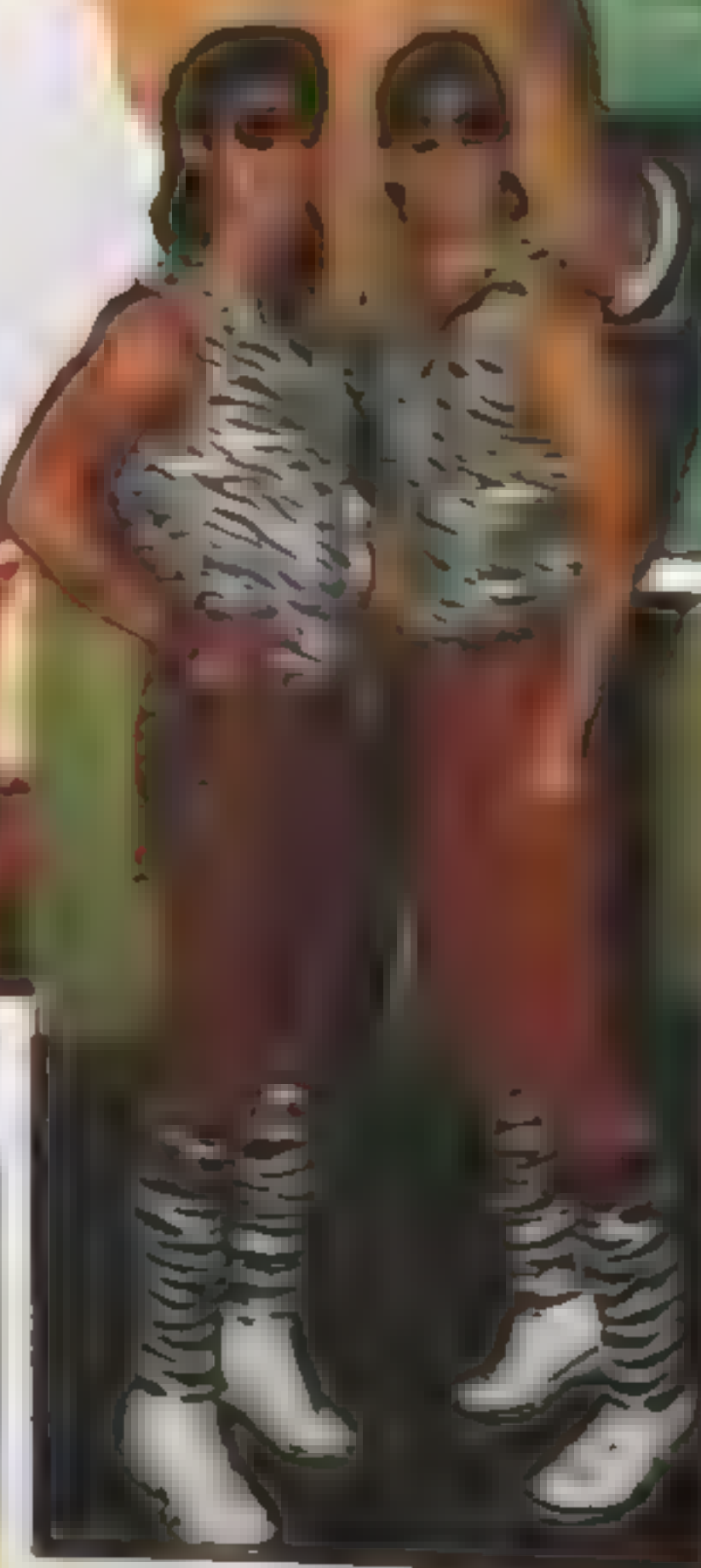
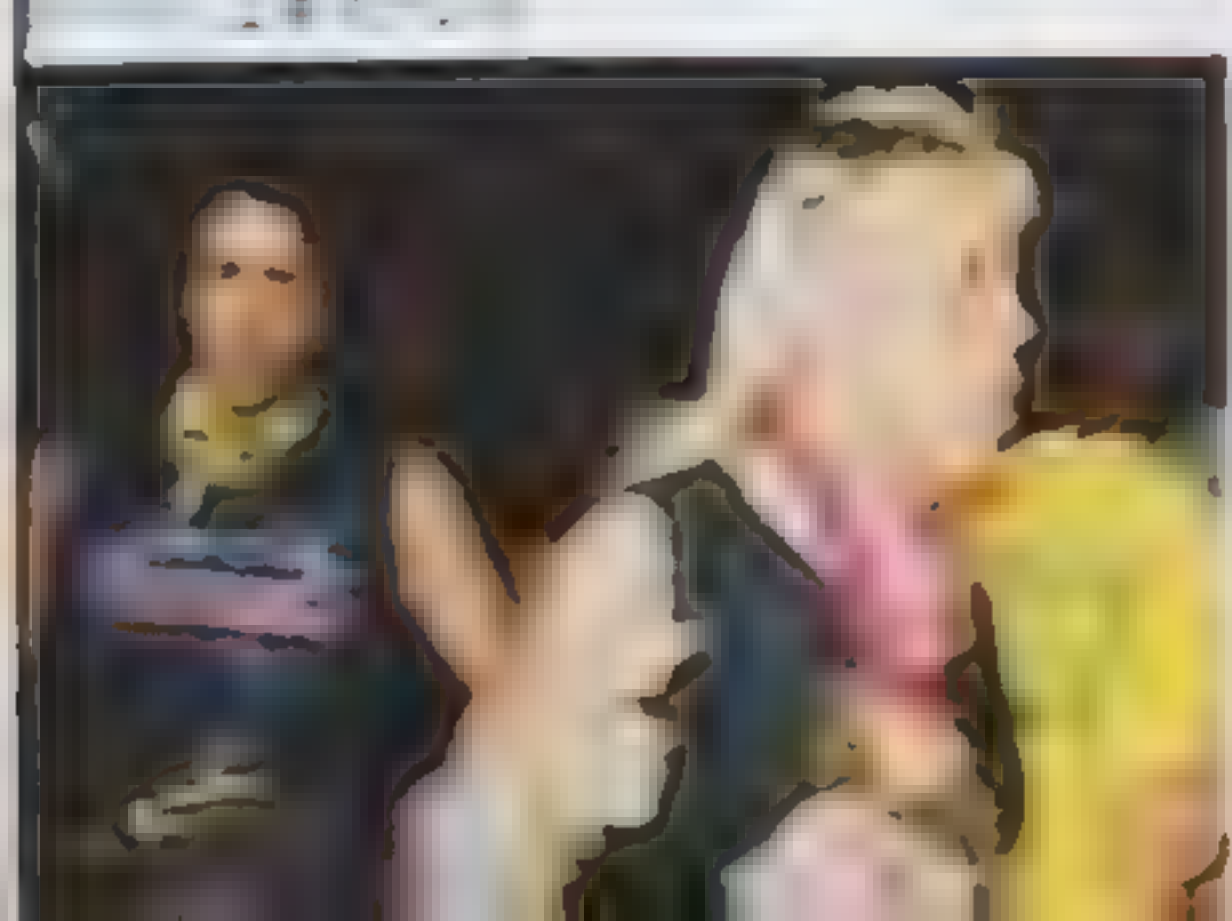
Bobby with his hair and hair collection

on the 1960s Bush war (Bottom Left)





でも、タッグチームの本場は
アメリカかなのだ



11月中旬といえは両団体ともにタッグリーグ戦の季節。新日本は今年「ヤパン・カップ争奪タッグリーグ」、全日本は従来通り「世界最強タッグ」を開けるが、外人サイドのメンバーはやはり常連組がズラリ。
ハンセン、デビアス組、プロディ、スヌーカ組、マードック、スー一組らは日本でこそチームを組んでいるが、アメリカでは典型的なシンレーヤーだ。広い米マット界に目をやれば、アクの強いタッグの専門ゴロいる。
ここに紹介した4チームは、そのなかのほんの一部。どのチームもアメリカの名テリトリのトップクラスで活躍しているコンビだ。しかも、キャッチした情報によれば、この4チームはいずれも両団体の来春予定外人リストにその名前が挙がっている。ひょっとしたら、来春あたり新日本に、M・エクスプレスは全日本のリングに上ることになるかも。

"You've heard of hanging from the rafters", JC remembers, "well they were literally using window ledges for seats, and half of them were related to the Mulkeys, including the fire marshall or he'd have closed the whole place down. You couldn't move or breathe. Concession sales were nil because nobody had room to leave their seat and would have never gotten it back. The office wanted us to fuck them and we knew we'd never get out of there alive if we did, and the cops were on their side as well."

"We begged for a DQ but no go--so we did the simplest screw we knew. Out of nowhere after a 20:00 match of mostly Mulkeys kicking our asses until they were blown up from beating on us, Bill went to monkey flip Bobby out of the corner, Stan held Bobby's trunks, Bill fell on his head and Bobby pinned him. At the three count, all 3 of us ran as fast as we could down the aisle before the bell finished ringing, grabbed our bags by the back door and jumped in our car that one of the referees had running."

"We burned rubber out of the parking lot and in the rear view mirror saw the fans spilling out of the place after us like the villagers after Frankenstein. It was one of the damndest experiences we'd ever had, and we'd had some experiences!"

4 Columbus, Oh.

Armstrong & Horner over MX DQ USTTC \$15,000

5 Baltimore, Md.

MX over Armstrong & Horner USTTC \$100,000

6 Asheville, N.C. 2PM TV 2 tapes

7 Wilmington, N.C. Outdoor show rained out

8 Amherst, Va. Garvins over MX DQ USTTC

9 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

10 Jackson, Miss.

MX over Michael Hayes & Shane Douglas \$6,500

11 Memphis, Tn.

Warriors & Dr Death over MX & Bubba \$20,000

12 St. Louis, Mo.

Dusty & RW Hawk over MX non title \$55,000

13 Cincinatti, Oh.

MX over Valiant & K. Windham USTTC \$9,600

14-17 OFF

The MX & JC were flown to the isle of St. Maarten with all the top JCP talent for the annual NWA convention, to vacation.

18 Pittsburgh, Pa.

MX drew Windham & J. Garvin 30:00 USTTC

19 Charlotte, N.C. TV

MX over Nikita & B Windham USTTC

Syndicated TV was shot at this house show

which also saw the beginning of a progra
MX vs. Sean Royal & Chris Champion
Breed

20 Atlanta, Ga

J. Garvin & Michael Hayes over MX DQ

21-24 OFF

25 Detroit, Mich.

R&R over MX DQ NAWTTC \$111,000

This match was underneath the famous Ronnie Garvin NWA Title win over Ric Flair in the NWA debut at the Joe Louis Arena, drawing a strong house of about 10,000 fans.

26 Norfolk, Va.

Dusty & Nikita over MX DQ USTTC \$55,100

27 Greensboro, N.C.

Morton over Eaton

Gibson over Lane DQ

Ron Garvin over Bubba NWA World Title

(Bubba's first shot at the World Title continued his rapid ascension as a top star.)

28 Greenville, S.C.

Morton over Eaton

Lane over Denny Brown

29 Misenheimer, N.C. TV 2 tapes

On this night, another dimension to the MX-R&R rivalry was added when, in a TV World Tag Title match, the MX attacked and injured Ricky Morton on the way to the ring for an R&R title defense against Tully Blanchard and Am Anderson, causing the R&R to lose the belts and the Horsemen to achieve their first NAWTTC reign.



30 Charleston, S.C.

J.Garvin & Windham over MX DQ USTTC

OCTOBER 1987

1 OFF

2 Richmond, Va.

Warriors over MX DQ USTTC \$25,000

3 Pittsburgh, Pa.

Warriors over MX DQ USTTC \$16,000

4 Asheville, N.C. 2PM

Gibson over Eaton \$12,100

Macon, Ga. 8PM

Gibson & Valiant over MX non title \$21,000

(A weekend of dismal houses including an embarrassment in Pittsburgh did not bode well--Morton was off selling the TV injury.)

5 Greenville, S.C. R&R over MX non title

6 Spartanburg, S.C. TV 2 tapes

7-8 OFF

9 Albany, Ga. Bubba over George South
Bobby over Chris Champion

10 Denver, Co.

Warriors over Lane & Bubba \$17,000

11 Columbus, Oh. 2PM

MX drew Hayes & J. Garvin 20:00 \$25,000

Cincinatti, Oh. 8PM

MX drew Hayes & J Garvin 20:00 \$21,000

12 Marion, Va. MX over B & K Windham USTTC

13 Shelby, N.C. TV 2 tapes

New Breed over MX DQ DARK

14 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Wed.)

15 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Thur.)

16 Off

17 Baltimore, Md.

MX over Armstrong & Horner USTTC \$93,000

18 Roanoke, Va. 2PM TV

New Breed over MX DQ USTTC

Nikita over Eaton TV Title

Atlanta, Ga. 8PM

MX over New Breed USTTC \$25,000

19 Greenville, S.C. MX over New Breed USTTC

20 Fayetteville, N.C. TV 2 tapes

21 Greenwood, S.C. New Breed over MX DQ USTTC

22 West Palm Beach, Fla.

MX drew New Breed 30:00 USTTC

23 Charlotte, N.C. MX over New Breed USTTC

24 Philadelphia, Pa.

MX over New Breed USTTC \$40,500

25 Greensboro, N.C.

MX over New Breed USTTC \$28,000

The decline continues with rotten houses in Atlanta, Charlotte, Philly and Greensboro--the talent was being stretched too thin in the new areas, too much distraction for the front office employees, the new talent wasn't getting over, and many said Dusty was showing signs of burnout from the incredible workload.

26 Greenville, S.C. MX over New Breed USTTC

27 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes

28 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Wed.)

29 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Thurs.)

30 Norfolk, Va. MX over New Breed USTTC \$24,000

31 OFF

NOVEMBER 1987

1 Asheville, N.C. 2PM

R&R over MX Bunkhouse

Orlando, Fla. 8PM

R&R over MX Bunkhouse

Kevin Sullivan over Bubba COR \$8,700

2 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes

R&R over MX Bunkhouse DARK

3 Winston-Salem, N.C.

R&R over MX Bunkhouse \$10,000

4 Monroe, N.C. MX over New Breed non title

5 Raleigh, N.C. R&R over MX Bunkhouse \$10,700

6 Marion, N.C. MX over New Breed non title

7 Akron, Oh. R&R over MX Bunkhouse \$19,700

8 Atlanta, Ga.

MX & Tully & Arn DDQ

R&R & New Breed \$43,000

9 Toccoa, Ga. R&R over MX non title \$8,700

10 Jacksonville, N.C. MX over New Breed \$2,600

11 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Wed.)

12 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes (Thur.)

13 West Palm Beach, Fla.,

M. Graham, Sullivan & R. King
over MX & Bubba \$10,000

14 Sarasota, Fla.

MX over M. Graham & R. King USTTC
\$44,000

15 Oklahoma City, Ok.

Eaton & Bubba won singles over jobbers

K. Sullivan over Lane \$11,300

Tulsa 8PM TV 2 tapes

16 Greenville, S.C. MX over New Breed USTTC

17 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes

R&R over MX DQ USTTC DARK

18 Lincolnton, N.C. MX over New Breed USTTC

19 Troy, Oh. MX vs. R&R (JC off sick)

- 20 Williamson, W.Va. MX vs. R&R (JC off sick)
 21 Washington, D.C.
 R&R over MX Bunkhouse \$76,000
 22 Johnstown, Pa. 2PM
 Road Warriors over MX non title \$20,000
 Boone, N.C. 8PM R&R over MX non title
 23 Bennettsville, S.C. R&R over MX non title

THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

On the eve of Starrcade '87, the MX and JC were experiencing their first major problems with Jim Crockett Promotions, and they weren't the only ones. Business had gone in the tank after the Bashes, and was getting worse. All the territories that JCP had consumed left them running two, sometimes three shows per night to cover the areas, satisfy the commitments and employ the entire roster. This left all the cards diluted except for the biggest markets, and because the MX had no high-profile program, they were generally booked on the smaller events.

The New Breed weren't seen by the fans as main event talent, the Garvins angle had played out, Nikita Koloff would soon quit the sport due to a family illness, and there were only so many times each city could see MX vs. R&R no matter how good the matches were.

TV tapings were everywhere to satisfy the commitments of the Wrestling Network, which comprised the 2 NWA syndicated shows, plus the 2 shows absorbed from the UWF, the Florida shows, and more, and in those days unless you were booked in a "DARK" match, the pay for TV was \$40 no matter who you were. In addition, the Carolinas, Georgia and Virginia, the "core" territories, were dropping fast as the fans started to feel they were being abandoned with the national expansion. Nothing illustrated this point better than Starrcade 1987.

Starrcade had been Greensboro's baby since its inception in 1983, and Greensboro was one of the biggest-grossing cities in the sport. But Jim Crockett was persuaded that in 1987, he needed to leave the city to go to a "major market" for the company's debut on PPV.

To compete with WWF, it was felt, the company had to have a "big city" look and "who's ever heard of Greensboro?" was the question. Even when Starrcade '85 and '86 emanated from both Greensboro and Atlanta, the North Carolina fans viewed that with pride. But when Starrcade '87 was moved to Chicago, the local fans never forgave JCP. Starrcade '86 in

Greensboro, between live and closed circuit gate, drew over 20,000 fans paying almost \$380,000. Chicago, as a live event, drew a sellout 10,000 paying \$180,000.

But what of PPV? Well, after getting commitments from all the cable companies to carry the show JCP was shocked to find out that Vince McMahon, using the "predatory business practices" that he would later accuse Ted Turner of, gave the cable industry an ultimatum--carry Starrcade, and we won't let you carry Wrestlemania. Favoring the proven success, all but 5 cable companies conceded, and Starrcade's PPV revenue was nil. As to the MX, between no money opponents, constant TV tapings and declining houses, their paychecks on a few weeks had dropped below \$1000. They were still contracted for a \$100,000 annual guarantee, and had made that by the time the business dropped in Fall, but they weren't about making their minimums. They decided to wait until the New Year before making any stink, out of loyalty to the company.

24 The MX were flown to New York for radio promos and promotional appearances for the following day's debut at the Nassau Coliseum

25 Nassau, Long Island--Nassau Coliseum WAR GAMES

Dusty Rhodes, R. Garvin, B. Windham & The Rock & Roll Express over MX, Bubba, Blanchard & Arn Anderson \$126,000

Dusty put the hottest match, the War Games, in the business at the time, with the NWA's 10 top stars, into the main event at the Nassau Coliseum debut and drew a strong 10,000 plus paying \$126,000 into Vince McMahon's backyard, but this type of business would be hard to sustain given the WWF's exclusive contract on Madison Square Garden and its overall stranglehold on the New York market.

Conversely, it should be noted that despite the WWF's strong business in every major market in the country during the initial "Hulkamania" expansion of 1984-1987, the Hulkster and his ilk had yet to be met with anything other than what could be described as complete apathy on the part of the fans in the Carolinas-Virginias-Georgia area, and due to their education to serious as opposed to cartoon wrestling, this would not change for almost 10 years.

26 CHICAGO, ILL--STARRCADE 1987, CHI-TOWN HEAT

R&R over Midnight SCAFFOLD \$180,000(SO)

The aborted attempt at PPV debut has been documented, as well as the mistake in taking Starrcade away from Greensboro--on the plus side, this was the FOURTH consecutive Chicago sellout, again at raised prices, but another major mistake was made here as the Road Warriors, Chicago's hottest attraction, were screwed in their World Tag Title match vs. Tully & Arn in such a way that left a bad taste in the Chicago fans' mouths.

As for the MX, an attempt to recreate the previous years' magic with another scaffold match didn't work, as even with the R&R as opponents, a scaffold match can only be so good, and it wasn't the blow-away match the two teams could have had on the ground. The MX & JC's payoffs, \$10,765 each, were as much an attempt to placate the team for their placement the previous few months as compensation for risking their necks in this ill-conceived venture.

27 OFF

28 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

ST. Petersburg, Fla 8pm

R&R over MX Bunkhouse

29-30 OFF

DECEMBER 1987

The month of December once again saw the feature attraction on nearly every event the Bunkhouse Stampede Battle Royal, with everyone on the card in a come-as-you-are street fight Battle Royal, with the two winners of the most events to meet in January for the bronze boot and "\$100,000 prize"

1 Monroe, La. TV 2 tapes plus BHouse Stampede \$14,700

2 Miami Beach, Fla. TBS TV plus BHouse Stampede
Lane over Kendall Windham
Eaton over Rex King \$17,000

3 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

4 Hampton, Va. TV BHouse Stampede
MX over Ricky Santana & Mike Rotunda \$35,000

5 Lakeland, Fla. 25 man BHouse Stampede

6 Charlotte, N.C. 2PM TV TAPING

Hayes & Garvin over MX DQ USTTC DARK
Atlanta, Ga. 8PM

MX, Tully & Arn over R&R & N. Breed CAGE

7 Lafayette, La. 26 man BHouse Stampede

8 Baton Rouge, La.

Bubba won 28 man BHouse Stampede \$12,000

9 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

10 Raleigh, N.C. TBS TV 25 man BHouse Stampede
Dusty & Nikita over MX USTTC DQ

11 OFF

12 Baltimore, Md. 2PM

25 man BHouse Stampede \$47,000
Greensboro, N.C. 8PM

25 man BHouse Stampede

13 Albany, Ga. TV 2PM

25 man BHouse Stampede \$22,000
Cincinnati 8PM

25 man BHouse Stampede \$23,000

14-24 OFF--CHRISTMAS BREAK

25 Charlotte, N.C. 2PM

27 man BHouse Stampede \$35,000
Atlanta, Ga. 8PM

26 man BHouse Stampede \$60,000

26 Richmond, Va. TV 2PM 2tapes

28 man BHouse Stampede
Philadelphia 8PM

20 man BHouse Stampede

Eaton drew Windham 20:00 \$75,000

27 Charleston, W.VA. 2PM 1 TV tape

Eaton over Chris Champion

24 man BHouse Stampede \$31,000

Norfolk, Va. 8PM

Eaton drew Windham 20:00

28 St. Louis, Mo. TV 1 TBS Tape

20 man BHouse Stampede \$50,000

29 Savannah, Ga. 20 man BHouse Stampede

30-31 OFF

TURN AND FACE THE STRANGE CH-CH-CHANGES, WE'RE GONNA BE RICHER MEN--

As January 1988 came around, more changes were in order. The December tour had been dismal, with TV tapings everywhere and houses doing a fraction of what the previous two years' had. Bubba Rogers, pissed off at having gotten a \$5,000 check for Starrcade, half what the Express and JC had made even though he climbed the scaffold as well for a spot with Ricky Morton, was left vulnerable to a Vince McMahon raid, and left for the WWF to become the Big Bossman and have a successful run against Hulk Hogan.

The MX were appeased somewhat when they began being booked in more important matches, but they still had no quality teams to work regular programs with, and despite spotty successes, the houses were getting worse as the core Carolinas cities dropped to new lows, much of it caused by fan discontent at feeling "abandoned" in the expansion, New

York. Additionally, with at least two cities running on many nights, the Express were booked on the "Buttermilk" run, making many Elberton, Georgia's instead of Chicago or the like. The boys began taking steps by the end of January to address not only compensation but opponents as well, and we'll cover those efforts shortly.

JANUARY 1988

- 1 Atlanta, Ga.
Dusty over Eaton, Nikita, Dick Murdoch & Black Bart to win final spot in the BHouse Stampede finals CAGE \$78,000
- 2 Asheville, N.C.
Lane over Chris Champion
Nikita over Eaton TV title \$10,200
- 3 Baltimore, Md.
D. Murdoch drew Nikita 20:00 TV Title \$72,000
This event doubled as a syndicated TV taping where JC began managing Murdoch as well, and the MX furthered an issue with Dusty Rhodes leading to some main events. JC remembers this as the best Nikita Koloff match he ever saw, a tribute to Dick's incomparable talent.
- 4 OFF
- 5 Spartanburg, S.C.
MX over Sting & Ron Simmons USTTC \$4,200
- 6 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
At this taping, Murdoch won a TV match, the MX won two and received the 1987 Tag Team of the Year award from Pro Wrestling Illustrated's Bill Apter.
- 7 OFF
- 8 OFF The scheduled event in Newton, N.C. was snowed out.
- 9 Huntington, W. Va.
Dusty & Nikita over MX CAGE non title \$20,000
- 10 Greenville, S.C. 2PM
R.Garvin & Sting over MX DQ USTTC
Charlotte, N.C. 8PM
MX & Murdoch over Brad, Horner & Stallion
MX NC Dusty & Nikita CAGE
- 11 OFF The MX were stuck in Charlotte--another snowstorm
- 12 N. Wilkesboro, N.C.
R.Garvin & Sting over MX non title \$10,200
- 13 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes
- 14 OFF
- 15 Richmond, Va. TV
Lane & Murdoch over ?
Dusty & Nikita over Lane & Murdoch CAGE \$55,000

- (A TBS TV taping on location--Eaton was off until 1/20 with a minor injury)
- 16 Philadelphia Dusty over Lane
- 17 Charleston, W. Va. TV 2 tapes
ST. Louis, Mo. 8PM
Dusty over Murdoch DQ (MX OFF)
- 18 Columbia, S.C.
Sting over Murdoch DQ (MX OFF)
- 19 OFF
- 20 Georgetown, S.C.
R. Garvin & Valiant over MX DQ non title \$16,000
- 21 Chesterfield, S.C.
Garvins over MX DQ non title \$8,900
- 22 Elberton, Ga.
Gibson & Windham over MX DQ non title \$11,300
- 23 Lakeland, Fla.
Garvin & Windham over MX DQ USTTC \$20,000
- 24 NASSAU COLISEUM--LONG ISLAND, N.Y.
--BUNKHOUSE STAMPEDE PPV
Eaton drew Nikita Koloff 20:00 TV Title \$80,000
Crockett's second venture into PPV worked little better than the first. Artistically, it was a bomb for the MX as Eaton's match with Nikita was ill-received by the notoriously hard NYC area crowd, and Stan's originally-booked single match with Jimmy Garvin was cut for time. The live gate was way down from the Nassau debut in November, as the NWA just did not have the exposure in the New York market of the WWF.
- On PPV, they were once again throttled by the advent of the WWF Royal Rumble, airing on free TV on the USA network in a successful attempt by Vince to sabotage JCP's PPV aspirations yet again. The only good thing to come of this fiasco was the MX & JC's payoffs of \$5,000 each, as much an attempt to placate them as an actual payoff they "earned."
- 25 Fayetteville, N.C.
Garvins over MX DQ non title \$5,400
- 26 Raleigh, N.C. TV 2 tapes
Eaton over Dusty DQ USHW Title
- 27 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes-- 2 MX wins
- 28 OFF
- 29 Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lane over Ricky Santana
Dusty over Eaton \$60,000
- 30 Greensboro, N.C. TV
Dusty over Eaton US Title (TV)
Dusty & Nikita over MX BULLROPE \$105,000
Greensboro was still showing life with a strong

house, but underneath the MX's double bull rope main event with Dusty & Nikita, another TV taping in a major market didn't sit well with a lot of fans
31 OFF

FEBRUARY 1988

1 Newton, N.C.

Sting & Windham over MX DQ non title

2 Spartanburg, S.C.

Sting, Brad & Horner over MX & Murdoch

3 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape-- MX & Murdoch wins

4 Chattanooga, Tn.

MX over J. Garvin & Mike Jackson

Nikita over Murdoch \$26,000

5 OFF

6 Charlotte, N.C.

Nikita over Murdoch Barbed Wire \$48,500

7 Columbia, S.C.

Sting & J. Garvin over MX DQ USTTC \$14,400

8 Macon, Ga.

Windham, Brad & Horner over MX & JC

9 Albany, Ga.

Sting & Windham over MX DQ USTTC

10 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes--1 MX win

11 Columbus, Ga. Garvins over MX DQ USTTC

12 Baltimore, Md.

Dusty, Nikita, Windham & Misty Blue over

MX, Murdoch & JC CAGE \$103,000

This freak one-shot match, after an angle on TBS between girl wrestler Misty Blue and JC and several weeks of promos, drew nearly 10,000 paying \$103,000 in a snowstorm.

13 Philadelphia

Garvins over MX DQ USTTC

Nikita over Murdoch \$78,000

14 Chicago 2PM

MX & Dick drew Garvins & Windham \$60,000

Atlanta 8PM

Garvins & Windham over MX & Dick \$106,000

(Atlanta rebounded in a major way and JC's records don't show why, but it had to have been Flair in a major match.)

15 OFF

16 Albuquerque, N.M.

MX drew Sting & Garvin 30:00 USTTC

Murdoch over the Hillbilly (local) \$33,000

17 Los Angeles, Ca.

Murdoch over Bill Anderson

MX drew Sting & Garvin 30:00 USTTC

18 Souix City, Ia.

126

Choking

MX drew Santana & JGarvin 20:00 non title \$31,000
 19 Richmond, Va. TV 2 tapes-- 1 MX win \$75,000
 20 Norfolk, Va.

MX over Windham & Garvin USTTC 82,000

21 Nassau Coliseum, New York

Eaton over Santana

Lane drew Simmons 20:00

One month after the Stampede PPV, ANOTHER try at the New York market was so dismal the house is not recorded, but the MX pay offs albeit placed in prelims, were \$125 EACH! The only heat the MX were able to get from this dead crowd was after Lane's dismal draw with a still-green Simmons, and JC asked the ref for 5 more minutes! At least Vince had the good sense to stay out of Charlotte instead of embarrassing himself.

22 Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

MX over RGarvin & Simmons USTTC \$2,900

23 Elizabeth, N.J. SHOW CANCELLED

(After dying in the Long Island show, and drawing 394 paid in Poughkeepsie, the third show was cancelled and the MX headed south, hoping never to return to New York again.)

24 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape-- 1 MX win

25 Columbia, S.C.

Garvins over MX DQ USTTC \$5,400

26 Lynchburg, Va. Garvins over MX non title

27 OFF

28 Atlanta, Ga. MX over Garvins USTTC

29 Washington, N.C. Garvins over MX DQ non title

MARCH 1988

1 Gainesville, Ga.

Garvins over MX non title (JC OFF)

2 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

3 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes--2 MX wins \$23,000

4 Houston, Tx. MX over Garvins USTTC

5 Louisville, Ky. TV 2 tapes--2 MX wins \$30,000(SO)

(JC was happy to see a now-rare sellout in his hometown with 4,100 fans packing the Commonwealth Convention Center.)

6 Raleigh, N.C.

Garvins over MX DQ USTTC \$17,000

7 OFF

8 Spartanburg, S.C.

MX over Armstrong & Horner USTTC \$3,008

9 Wadesboro, N.C.

Armstrong & Horner over MX DQ non title \$2,400

10 Marion, Va.

Armstrong & Horner over MX non title \$7,500

11 Lenoir, N.C.

Armstrong & Horner over MX DQ non title \$5,200

As you can see, the Express were on a streak of "B" spot shows with depressing houses headed into Spring, and two things needed to be done--find quality, fresh opponents for a USTTC program to get back on the main shows, and address their compensation with Crockett. Even though they still beat their minimums in 1987, 1988 was shaping up to be a long year First up, opponents.

"In February", JC recalls, "We went to Dusty and made a big pitch for him to bring in Bobby Fulton and Tommy Rogers, the Fantastics. They were the best babyface team in the business in the ring at the time, and we knew we could tear the house down with them."

"Dusty agreed, so I called Fulton in Dallas and they gave their notices and worked out a start date for March 12 at TV. We worked out a deal with Dusty that the Fants would beat us clean in the middle in a non title match, using our own move, the Rocket Launcher, to start the program and get them over the first night in. That's what we did, the match got over great, and once it aired on March 26 on syndication, we were off to the races with Bobby and Tommy."

12 Norfolk, Va. TV 2 tapes

Fants over MX non title \$64,000

13 Columbus, Oh. 2PM

S. Douglas & R. Santana over MX DQ \$30,000

Atlanta, Ga. 8PM

MX over Armstrong & Horner USTTC

14 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes-- 2 MX wins

15 Columbia, S.C.

Lane over Douglas

Dusty over Eaton \$5,000

16-18 OFF



19 Chicago, Ill. MX over Garvins USTTC \$91,000

20 Charleston, W.Va. 2PM

Lane drew Douglas 20:00

Dusty over Eaton \$24,000

Charlotte, N.C. 8PM

MX over Douglas & Santana

21 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes 1 MX win

22 Athens, Ga. Garvins over MX DQ non title \$7,200

23 Gastonia, N.C.

Lane over Douglas

RGarvin over Eaton

24 OFF

25 Biscoe, N.C.

Garvins over MX DQ non title \$4,200

26 Richmond, Va. MX over Garvins USTTC \$85,000

27 GREENSBORO, N.C.

CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 1-LIVE ON TBS

Fantastics over MX DQ USTTC

"BACK AT YA, PAL!!"

After Vince McMahon sabotaged Crockett's first two PPV attempts, JCP decided to use THEIR assets to give him a taste of his own medicine. Against a critically-panned Wrestlemania 4 from Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, the NWA staged a live 2½ hour special on TBS with a loaded lineup, and it took untold buys away from the WWF's premiere annual event. The live event drew a strong 5-6,000 fans paying for what they could have seen for free at home, but the ratings were the story.

In 1988, TBS was available in only about 40 million homes, as opposed to almost 100 million in 2009, but the special did a whopping 5.8 rating, a 13 share, and about 4 million viewers. The main event, the legendary 45:00 draw for the NWA World Title between Ric Flair and Sting, was the match that made Sting a star. It did a 7.8 rating with a 15 share and over 5 million viewers in its last 15 minutes, making it the most-watched pro wrestling match on cable in history.

That record would stand for over 10 years, until the late 90's Steve Austin & Rock boom period, and after the cable networks had doubled their penetration across the country. The MX-Fants USTTC match, a wild brawl with chairs, tables, and a belt-whipping angle at the finish, stole the rest of the show and finished top 3 in most 1988 year end match of the year polls.

28 Greenville, S.C.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$17,000

29 N. Wilkesboro, N.C.

128

Garvins over MX non title \$2,800

30 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape 1 MX win

31 OFF

APRIL, 1988

1 Norfolk, Va. MX drew Fants 30:00 USTTC \$40,000

2 Bluefield, W.Va. Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$8,000

3 Atlanta, Ga.

MX over Nikita & DrDeath DQ USTTC \$44,000

4 Hartwell, Ga. Fants over MX DQ USTTC

5 Gaffney, S.C. 1 tape

6 ATLANTA TBS TV Fants over MX DQ USTTC

7 Kings Mountain, N.C. Fants over MX non title

8 Richmond, Va.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$20,000

9 Baltimore, Md.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$101,000

10 Salisbury, Md.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$8,100

11 Fayetteville, N.C.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$4,100

12 Kingstree, S.C.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$9,100

13 ATLANTA TBSTV 1 tape 1 MX win

14 Columbia, S.C. Fants over MX DQ USTTC

SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED?

Now that the Express was at least satisfied inside the ring, the time had come to make them happy at the bank. They signed new contracts with JCP for a whopping \$225,000 per year, each, on April 15, 1988. But it wasn't that cut and dried. "After the Bunkhouse Stampede PPV, we had gone to Crockett to renegotiate." Cornette remembered.

"We explained that we had been money players for him, loyal to him as long as any top guys there, and it wasn't our fault we had no opponents and were being booked on the buttermilk run. We had proven ourselves, and asked him what he could do for us in light of our shrinking payoffs, even with the \$100,000 minimums we had on our existing contracts, which if there was a shortfall, would be made up with a "balloon payment" at year's end."

"At the time our talks started, he was still believing, and had been convinced by his advisors, that PPV was still going to take off, syndicated TV ad revenue was going to be rolling in, and the Sunday TBS show was going to become "NWA Main Event", with three arena-quality matches, a new concept then.

1988 JIM CROCKETT, SR. MEMORIAL CUP

FIRST ROUND

BLANCHARD/A. ANDERSON	BLANCHARD/ANDERSON
BYE	
K. WINDHAM/STALLION	
TERMINATOR/GRN. MACHINE	
STING/R. GARVIN	STING/R. GARVIN
BYE	
L. KOLOFF/MURDOCH	
VALIANT/WILBUR	
ROAD WARRIORS	ROAD WARRIORS
BYE	
R. KING/N. ROYAL	
WHATLEY/CONWAY	
MIDNIGHT EXPRESS	MIDNIGHT EXPRESS
BYE	
NEW BREED	
MEXICAN TWIN DEVILS	
BARBARIAN/WARLORD	BARBARIAN/WARLORD
BYE	
JAPAN	
ARMSTRONG HORNER	
B. WINDHAM/LUGER	B. WINDHAM/LUGER
BYE	
CRUEL CONNECTION	
THE SHEEPHERDERS	
THE FANTASTICS	THE FANTASTICS
BYE	
PEREZ ZBYSZKO	
DOUGLAS/SANTANA	
ROTUNDA STEINER	ROTUNDA/STEINER
BYE	
DOC SIMMONS	DOC/SIMMONS
BYE	

being paid like house show main events. In the course of several meetings through February & March, all this rosy talk took place, but he never pitched a figure at us. Finally, as much to be a wiseass as to get a starting figure going, I said "Jimmy, with all these things going on, it sounds like we'll make \$250,000 next year!"

He looked at a piece of paper and replied, "At your guy's level, we had you figured for \$200,000." Again jokingly, I said, "Well, hell, let's make it 225 and you've got a deal", and he said OK! We tried not to shit ourselves and agreed to come back and sign the contracts the next week. After signing, we walked outside and basically agreed that we still didn't believe it, but we had a legal contract, for Pete's sake, and we were bound to get SOMETHING out of it."

"Exactly WHEN Crockett found out he was in serious money trouble and began talks of selling to TBS we will never know for sure, but I do know for a fact HOW he found out, from an eyewitness. JCP needed to make another big purchase, and Crockett told his accountant, Dave Johnson, to figure out where the money was going to come from. Crockett didn't know that his longtime accountant, who was great for the old Mid-Atlantic, four state territory, was as lost as a ball in high weeds with this national expansion."

"Johnson came in the office and worked all weekend trying to figure out where they were, then walked into Crockett's office one morning, closed the door, and 5 minutes later they both came out white as sheets. JCP was about 2 million dollars in the red, the TV revenue wasn't coming in like everyone had said, PPV hadn't become the golden goose, and with house show business down almost everywhere, they were fucked."

"A lot of people blame Dusty for JCP going under, but the fact is if Crockett had known he was in debt before it was too late, none of that would have happened. Vince having a huge, professional office staff and Crockett having the same handful of people he'd had for 20 years working in a converted convenience store, that were in over their heads, is what made the difference in the wrestling war. The wrestling product made the money--expanding too far, too fast with the wrong people lost it."

"But back to us. I'd like to think Crockett signed our deal in good faith, or at least that he knew TBS would have to pay us eventually, but in actual fact, I think he pitched the deal in good faith but by the time he signed it probably knew HE'D never pay

off on it, at least. I do know we were the first ones to start to renegotiate, and after our contracts were signed, he broke off talks with the Horsemen and others, so he knew something."

"We ended up behind only Flair, Dusty, the Warriors and Luger as having the highest contracts in the NWA. But armed with great opponents, me booking a lot of our angle with Dusty's approval, and big numbers on paper, we continued on with our crummy regular payoffs feeling at least a little better."

15 Boston, Mass.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC

\$88,000

16 Cincinnati, Oh.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC

\$25,000

17 Asheville, N.C. TV 2 tapes 1 MX win
Charlotte, N.C. 8PM

Fants over MX DQ USTTC

18 West Palm Beach, Fla.

Fants over MX DQ USTTC

\$26,000

19 Miami, Fla. Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$37,600

JC remembers this match in the Knight Center as one of the best ever between the two teams, with nonstop action and the fans at a fever pitch, and wishes to this day it had been taped.

20 Jacksonville, Fla. TBS TV 1 tape 1 MX win

21 Sumter, S.C. Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$3,200

1988 CROCKETT CUP TAG TEAM TOURNAMENT

This year's Crockett Cup was split into 2 nights in 2 cities, Greenville, S.C. on 4/22 for the first two rounds, and Greensboro on 4/23 for the finals. The Express was seeded #3 behind Tully & Arn and The Road Warriors, and continued their tradition of putting over the eventual winners in the semi-finals.

22 Greenville, S.C. First round--

MX drew a bye

2nd round--

MX over Shepherders

\$53,000

23 Greensboro, N.C. 3rd round--

Sting & Luger over MX

\$115,000

24 Charleston, W.Va. TV 2 tapes

MX DCOR Fants USTTC

Atlanta, Ga. 8PM

MX DCOR Fants USTTC

25 Nashville, Tn. MX DCOR Fants USTTC \$24,000

26 Chattanooga, Tn. TV

Fants over MX to win USTTC

\$22,000

This match on NWA World Wide Wrestling went over 40:00 and comprised the entire hour of the

TV show, an exciting match which included a teased ref stoppage for Fulton being unable to continue before a hail-mary victory by the Fants for the U.S. Tag belts, bringing the house down and once again finishing high in many match of the year polls. This concluded an uninterrupted reign of 11 months and 10 days for the Express as US Tag Team Champions.

27 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape

28 Rock Hill, S.C. 1st taping for new MAIN EVENT on TBS

Lex Luger over Bobby Eaton

29 Washington, D.C.

MX DCOR Fants USTTC \$43,000

30 Laurinburg, N.C.

Fants over MX USTTC \$7,500

MAY 1988

1 Indianapolis, Ind. Fants over MX USTTC \$37,000

2 Bishopville, S.C. Fants over MX non title \$9,400

3-4 OFF

5 Raleigh, N.C. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

Fants over MX DQ non title

6 Pittsburgh, Pa. Fants over MX DQ non title \$45,000

7 ATLANTA TBS TV 1 tape--1 MX win

Fants smash JC's face in a cake

Baltimore, Md. 8PM

Fants over MX DQ non title \$65,000

8 Roanoke, Va. Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$25,000

9 Fayetteville, N.C. TV TBS Main Event taping

Fants over MX non title DARK \$14,000

10 Cherryville, N.C. Fants over MX non title

11 Tallahassee, Fla. TV TBS taping

12 Walterboro, S.C. Fants over MX non title

13 Hammond, Ind. Fants over MX non title \$4,500

14 Chicago, Ill. Road Warriors over MX \$35,000

15 Wilmington, N.C. 2PM

Fants over MX non title \$27,000

Asheville, N.C. TV 2 tapes--

1 MX win, Fants over MX \$11,000

16 Greenville, S.C. Warriors over MX

17 West Jefferson, N.C.

Fants over MX non title \$7000

18-19 OFF

20 Norfolk, Va. TV 2 tapes

21 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape

22 Atlanta, Ga. Fants over MX non title

23 Hartsville, S.C. Fants over MX non title \$10,048

24 Elberton, Ga. Fants over MX non title

25 OFF

26 Louisville, Ky.



Tammy Rogers and Bobby, 1988 Detroit Bash

MX DCOR Fants USTTC	\$15,000
27 St. Louis, Mo.	
Fants over MX (rev.dec) USTTC	\$40,000
28 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape	
Charleston, W.Va. 8PM	
Fants over MX (rev.dec) USTTC	\$13,700
29 Greensboro, N.C. Fants over MX non title	\$35,000
30 Union, S.C. Fants over MX non title	\$5,000
31 Sumter, S.C. TV TBS Main Event taping--3 tapes	
Eaton over Rogers,	
Sting over Lane	
MX over Kendall & Stallion	
MX DCOR Nikita & Dr Death	

JUNE 1988

1-3 OFF	
4 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape	
The famous attack on the Fantastics as they demonstrated the straightjacket JC would be put in at the Bash.	
Charlotte, N.C. 8PM	
MX over Armstrong & Horner	
5 Roanoke, Va. TV 2 tapes	
Columbus, Oh. 8PM	
Fants over MX USTTC	\$17,000
6 Greenville, S.C. Fulton over Eaton	\$7,500
7 Columbia, S.C. Eaton over Horner	\$2,950
8-9 OFF	
10 Houston, Tx.	
Fants over MX 2/3 falls USTTC	\$15,000
11 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape--1 MX win	
Florence, S.C. 8PM	
Fants over MX CAGE \$7000	
12 Asheville, N.C. 2PM	
Fants over MX USTTC	\$8,100
Albany, Ga. TV 8PM (2tapes+Main Event)	
2 MX wins	
MX drew Sting & Dr Death 20:00	
Fants over MX USTTC DARK	\$24,000
(In 3 days, the MX had 7 matches on 4 different shows.)	
13 Columbus, Ga. Fants over MX USTTC	
14 Spartanburg, S.C.	
MX over Armstrong & Horner	\$2,800
15-16 OFF	
17 Charleston, W.Va. Fants over MX USTTC	
18 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape--1 MX win	
Philadelphia, Pa. 8PM	
MX over Armstrong & Horner	\$77,000
19-21 OFF	
132	

22 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape	
23 Nashville, Tn. Fants over MX USTTC	\$18,000
24 Charlottesville, Va.	
MX over Armstrong & Horner	\$48,000
25 OFF	

June was a low point for JC and the MX--In the first 25 days of June, the three had had 11 days off and earned only \$3,115.00, an all-time low since they had come to work for JCP. But the 1988 Great American Bash tour was about to begin, the most ambitious and, in many ways, the most important Bash tour ever mounted. The wrestlers were still hoping to turn business around, the sale to TBS was still greatly an unfounded rumour, and the cards looked strong.

TBS was stepping in to help in the PPV area, and the Bash PPV would be the first one for the NWA with no opposition from the WWF on TV and full clearance with PPV systems across the country.

Dusty had loaded the lineups and peaked the angles to get the fans back in the arenas, and for the most part, it worked. Lex Luger was set to challenge Flair for the NWA Title on PPV, with the shows on tour mostly featuring the Horsemen (Flair, Tully, Arn & Barry Windham) In War Games matches against the top babyfaces (Dusty, Sting, Nikita Koloff and Dr. Death Steve Williams). Additionally, the MX were set for blowoff matches with the Fantastics, most of them 3 on 2 handicap matches with JC wrestling and under Bunkhouse rules, the Road Warriors in grudge matches with Barbarian & Warlord including a number of scaffold matches, Kevin Sullivan and his Varsity Club (Rick Steiner & Mike Rotunda) in grudges against Jimmy Garvin and partners (including Sullivan's "Triple Tower of Doom" concept on PPV) and a host of other events, including the return of the Rock & Roll Express after a 6 month absence.

The tour was grueling both in schedule, and because the guys worked their asses off to show the NWA was the number one product in the ring, but the goal was to turn the NWA's fortunes around in the war with the WWF.

1988 GREAT AMERICAN BASH ON TOUR

26 ORLANDO, FLA.--CIVIC CENTER--BASH	
Fants over MX	
10 Lashes to losers	\$83,000(RTC)
27 Greenville, S.C. TV	
MX over Armstrong & Horner	\$61,000

28 Columbia, S.C. TV
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$47,000(REC)
 29 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes--1 MX win
 30 OFF

JULY 1988

1 NORFOLK, VA. --SCOPE COLISEUM--BASH
 Fants over MX BHouse Match \$105,000

2 CHARLOTTE, N.C.
 --MEMORIAL STADIUM--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse Match \$98,000
 (A disappointing crowd of less than 10,000
 brings to an end the glory days of huge outdoor
 Charlotte shows.)

3 AMARILLO, TX.--CIVIC CENTER--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse match \$49,000

4 DALLAS, TEXAS--REUNION ARENA--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse match \$44,900

5 MIAMI, FLA.--KNIGHT CENTER--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse match \$58,000

6 TAMPA, PLA. --TAMPA STADIUM--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse match \$43,000

7 RALEIGH, N.C.--DORTON ARENA--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$101,000(SO)

8 PITTSBURGH, PA.--CIVIC ARENA--BASH
 Fants over MX SCAFFOLD \$80,000

9 CHICAGO, ILL.--UIC PAVILLION--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$100,000

10 BALTIMORE, MD.--THE ARENA--
 1988 GREAT AMERICAN BASH PPV
 MX over Fants to regain USTTC

This match, with Cornette placed in a straight-
 jacket and hung over the ring in a cage, also had a
 stipulation where the losing team would get 10 lashes.
 After the MX won by cheating, the Fants whipped JC
 (and GOOD) instead--the show drew a sellout of
 about 13,000 paying \$206,000, a Baltimore record,
 but the MX knew there was trouble in paradise when
 their payoffs were only \$1000 each, the lowest ever
 for a PPV or major show.

11 Salisbury, Md. TV 2 tapes
 Fants over MX & JC Bhouse DARK

12 HUNTSVILLE, AL.
 --VON BRAUN CIVIC CENTER--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$31,000

13 LOUISVILLE, KY.
 --BROADBENT ARENA--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$25,000

14 CHATTANOOGA, TN--UTC ARENA--BASH
 Fants over MX SCAFFOLD \$83,000(REC)

15 RICHMOND, VA.--THE COLISEUM--BASH
 Fants over MX SCAFFOLD \$109,000

16 GREENSBORO, N.C.
 --THE COLISEUM--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$100,000

17 CHARLESTON, W.VA.
 --CIVIC CENTER--BASH
 Fants over MX Bunkhouse

(JC missed this event, scheduled as a 3 on 2
 handicap, when the commercial flight he was on can-
 celled.)

18 Columbus, Ga. TV 2 tapes--2 MX wins
 Fants over MX & JC Bhouse DARK \$37,000

(Also at this taping, the MX & JC had a con-
 frontation with Tully, Arn & J.J. Dillon to set up a
 World vs. U.S. Tag Champions program to follow up
 the Bash tour.)

19 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape
 MACON, GA. 8PM--THE COLISEUM--BASH

2 TV tapes 1 MX win
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$61,000(REC)

20 OFF
 21 CINCINNATI, OH.

--CINCINNATI GARDENS--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC Bunkhouse \$84,000

22 ST. LOUIS, MO. --THE ARENA--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC Bunkhouse \$81,000

23 PHILADELPHIA, PA.
 --CIVIC CENTER--BASH
 Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$147,000

24 ROANOKE, VA. --CIVIC CENTER--BASH
 2PM Fants over MX & JC BHouse
 JOHNSON CITY, TN.

--FREEDOM HALL--BASH
 8PM Fants over MX Bunkhouse match
 (JC missed this event when there was no room
 on the private plane and no other way to make the
 show in time.)

25 ATLANTA TBS TV 11AM 1 tape
 FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.
 --CUMBERLAND COUNTY ARENA--BASH

8pm Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$66,000

26 SAVANNAH, GA. --CIVIC CENTER--BASH
 2 TV tapes--1 MX win
 Fants over MX Scaffold match \$58,000

27 JACKSONVILLE, FLA.
 --THE COLISEUM--BASH
 2 TV tapes--2 MX wins
 Fants over MX & JC Bunkhouse \$66,000



LES MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

UNE ÉQUIPE QUI N'ABANDONNE

JAMAIS

La plus grande qualité des Midnight Express est sans aucun doute leur ténacité au travail. Ils n'abandonnent jamais, ils ne lâchent jamais et c'est pour cette raison qu'ils ont autant de succès.

Stan Lane et Bobby Eaton luttent ensemble depuis au moins trois ans. C'est un tour de force. Ils ont gagné une foule incroyable de compétitions, ils ont été des adversaires redoutables des deux Horsemen, Anderson et Blanchard, (on dit d'ailleurs que c'est à cause des Midnight Express si Arn Anderson et Tully Blanchard ont quitté la NWA pour la WWF lorsqu'ils ont perdu leur titre de champion en équipe contre eux). Les Midnight Express, bien dirigés par Jim Cornette, ont perdu le titre de la NWA contre plus fort qu'eux cependant.

En se frottant aux Road Warriors, devenus subitement des vilains, cette jeune équipe malgré sa grande expérience, n'avait pas beaucoup de chance. Mais, leur carrière, qui est loin d'être terminée fut marquée par des victoires impressionnantes, contre Dusty Rhodes et Nikita Koloff et contre les Rock n' Roll Express, entre autres. On ne pouvait pas passer sous silence l'apport de cette équipe étoile de la lutte professionnelle.





28 DAYTONA BEACH, FLA.

—THE OCEAN CENTER--BASH

Fants over MX & JC BHouse

29 HOUSTON, TX.

—SAM HOUSTON COLISEUM--BASH

Fants over MX & JC Bunkhouse match

30 LANDOVER, MD.

—CAPITOL CENTRE--BASH

Fants over MX & JC Bunkhouse \$157,000

31 DETROIT, MICH.--COBO ARENA--BASH

Fants over MX SCAFFOLD \$103,000

AUGUST 1988

1 MILWAUKEE, WISC.--ARENA--BASH

Fants over MX & JC Bunkhouse \$48,000

2 SIOUX CITY, IOWA--BASH

Fants over MX w/JC Bunkhouse Tag \$32,000

3 SEATTLE, WASH.--ARENA--BASH

Fants over MX & JC BHouse \$96,000(SO)

4 LAS VEGAS, NEV. --BASH

Fants over MX & JC Bunkhouse \$48,000

5 LOS ANGELES, CA. --THE FORUM--BASH

Fants over MX & JC Bunkhouse \$78,000

6 OAKLAND, CA.--COLISEUM--BASH

Fants over MX DQ USTTC \$98,000

7 KANSAS CITY, MO.--KEMPER ARENA--

Fants over MX DQ USTTC

The 1988 Bash tour saw 37 Bashes and 7 TV tapings over a 43 day period, with only 2 days off, and the NWA talent toured from one side of the country to the other and back again. The MX and JC surely didn't phone it in, going 15:00 to 20:00 every night in 31 handicap bunkhouse matches, 4 regular tags, 5 scaffold matches and 8 TV bouts during that time period, with all 3 barely able to walk when it was over

The '88 Bash tour grossed almost 3 million dollars for JCP, and led to second-guessing among the wrestlers and in-fighting among the Crockett family over the proposed sale to TBS, especially when business stayed strong and actually improved in some markets after the Bashes with the Flair-Luger rematch-es and the brand-new MX vs. Tully & Am program headlining the cards

The MX & JC earned \$22,020 each for the series, not matching previous years due to the sheer number of events, but definitely an improvement from the first 6 months of 1988, and that, coupled with their new contracts and the strong houses drawn by their new program with the Horsemen, saw them excited going into the Fall

8-11 OFI

12 Norfolk, Va. TV 2 tapes
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC DARK \$98,000
 (The Norfolk house dropped only \$7,000 from the Bash card, which was unheard of, with the first MX-Tully & Arn match)

13 Macon, Ga.
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC \$27,000

14-17 OFF

18 Raleigh, N.C. Lane DDQ Arn \$70,000 (SO)

19 Richmond, Va.
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC \$141,000
 With a double main event of Flair vs. Luger for the NWA Title and MX vs. Tully & Arn for the World Tag Title, Richmond drew a near sellout of about 13,000 paying \$141,000, \$32,000 BETTER than the Bash card 4 weeks before.

20 Philadelphia, Pa. Warriors over MX DQ \$115,000

21 Cincinnati, Oh.
 MX over Morton & Armstrong \$52,000
 (Brad Armstrong subs for the injured Robert Gibson.)

22 Sumter, S.C. TV 2 tapes
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC
 (Gate not recorded, but MX-Tully & Arn match as advertised main event sells out the Sumter Civic Center.)

24 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape

25 Columbus, Ga.
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC

26 OFF

27 Charlotte, N.C.
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC \$102,000
 (The first wrestling event at the New Charlotte Coliseum draws about 13,500 fans paying \$102,000 for the double main event of Flair-Luger and MX-Tully & Arn, breaking the indoor gate record for Charlotte set by the MX vs. Rock & Roll in February 1986 by \$1,000)

28 Greensboro, N.C. TV 2 tapes
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC Dark \$43,000

29 Greenville, S.C.
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC \$24,000

30 Savannah, Ga. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
 MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC Dark \$18,000

31 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape

SEPTEMBER 1988

1 Raleigh, N.C. MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC
 2 Norfolk, Va.
 Tully & Arn over MX NAWWTTC \$41,000

3 Baltimore, Md.

MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC \$123,000
 (Again, with the magic double main event, the Flair-Luger Bash rematch and first MX-Tully & Arn match in Baltimore drew almost 12,000 paying \$123,000)

4 Detroit, Mich.

MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC \$70,000

5-8 OFF

9 Houston, Tx. MX DDQ Tully & Arn NAWWTTC

10 Philadelphia, Pa.

MX OVER TULLY & ARN TO WIN NAWWTTC
 \$72,000

ALL THE GOLD

JC recalls the events of one of the most infamous matches in NWA history: "Despite second-guessing due to the huge business in July and August and with all the gates on the rise, the sale of JCP to Turner Broadcasting was going through. Tully had gotten tons of heat for knocking Dusty as a booker to the TBS executives in meetings that were supposed to be "confidential", and there was heat both ways with Tully & Arn and the office. About 30:00 before the show, we got word that we were winning the NWA World Tag Title that night, and Tully & Arn were leaving to go to the WWF."

"To their credit as pros, Tully & Arn not only showed up to drop the belts, but said that the Express were the only team they would even consider dropping them to. The match was tremendous, with the fans on their feet in the home stretch, and when the double pin came, with Bobby covering Arn and Tully on top of Stan at the three count, referee Tommy Young handed us the belts. The pop was loud, but the fans you could tell expected some reversal of the decision. As we left with the belts, the farther down the aisle we got, the louder the crowd screamed, until as we disappeared through the locker room doors the fans were in a frenzy. They knew they had seen something they weren't supposed to see."

"When people ask me what my biggest regret is of the MX years, it is always instantly that we didn't get to finish the program with Tully & Arn. After only promos and a minor TV angle to promote the two hottest heel tag teams of the '80's in the NWA going head up for the first time, the gates were tremendous compared to the rest of the year, and I firmly believe if we had gotten into major TV angles and stipulations, that we would have broken all the records we set with the Rock & Roll, and had some of the classic

tag matches of the decade. As it was, our payoffs for the 16 "cold" matches (matches promoted only by promos instead of major angles or grudge stipulations) alone totalled over \$12,000, so who knows what we could have done with more time? I do know, that after Tully and Arn left, and with the sale to TBS imminent on November 1st, that not only did we have no one left to work with except rehashing the Fantastics program, but it seemed the life had been sucked out of the NWA, and the houses dropped like a turd in a punch-bowl."

"As it was, the MX were left in a position of heels that the fans were now cheering, and the only team in NWA history to hold both the World and United States Tag Titles with no teams to work with on the horizon. The Fantastics were moved into the challengers spot, but it didn't recreate the magic as many fans were now on the MX's side as were cheering for Fulton & Rogers."

September 1988

- 11 Fayetteville, N.C. TV 2 tapes--2 MX wins
Greensboro, N.C. 8PM
MX over Fantastics NAWWTTC \$27,000
- 12 Greenville, S.C.
MX over Fantastics NAWWTTC \$11,000
As a side project, because of his notoriety as a personality in Charlotte, JC also spent this week filling in for the vacationing morning team on WBCY radio in Charlotte, co-hosting with the afternoon DJ in addition to his wrestling bookings.
- 13 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes--2 MX wins
MX over Fants NAWWTTC DARK
- 14 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape--1 MX win
- 15 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape--1 MX win
- 16 Richmond, Va. MX over Fants NAWWTTC
- 17 Charleston, S.C.
Warriors over MX non title \$41,000
- 18 Roanoke, Va. MX over Fants NAWWTTC \$43,000
- 19-22 OFF
- 23 Frederick, Md.
MX over Fants NAWWTTC \$12,000
- 24 Washington, D.C.
MX over Fants NAWWTTC \$71,000
- 25 ATLANTA, Ga.
MX over Fants NAWWTTC \$48,000
- 26 Greenville, S.C.
Murdoch & Dr. Death over MX DQ \$6,500
- 27 Columbus, Ga. TV 2 tapes
MX over Fants NAWWTTC

- 28 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes--2 MX wins
- 29 Winnipeg, Canada (personal appearance)
- 30 Winnipeg, Canada
MX over Shepherders NAWWTTC

OCTOBER 1988

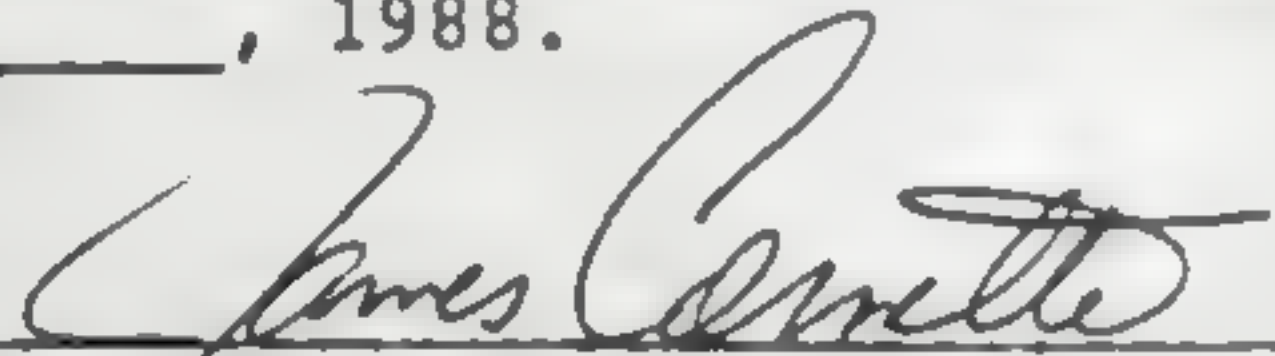
- 1 Brandon, Manitoba MX over Fants NAWWTTC
- 2 Chicago, Ill.
MX drew Dusty & Murdoch 30:00 WTTTC \$66,000
- 3 OFF
- 4 Macon, Ga. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
- 5 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes--2 MX wins
- 6 Raleigh, N.C.
MX over Rick Steiner & Kevin Sullivan NAWWTTC
- 7 Richmond, Va. 2 tapes--1 MX win
- 8 Charlotte, N.C.
MX over Road Warriors DQ NAWWTTC
- 9 OFF
- 10 Greenville, S.C.
MX over Road Warriors DQ NAWWTTC
- 11 Fayetteville, N.C. TV TBS taping--1 MX win
MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC DARK
- 12 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes--1 MX win
- 13 Sumter, S.C. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC DARK
- 14 Norfolk, Va.
MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$25,000
- 15 Philadelphia, Pa.
MX over Fantastics NAWWTTC
JJ Dillon over JC CAGE \$52,000
Originally booked as a double main event of MX-Tully & Arn for the WTTTC and JJ-JC in a Cage, this was changed to MX defending against the Fantastics after Tully & Arn left, but the Cage main event with JJ-JC was left intact. JC was pleased not only that it drew almost 5,000 paying \$52,000, but that JJ was enough of a pro to carry JC to an acceptable match before winning with a low blow.
- 16 Baltimore, Md.
MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$65,000
- 17 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape--1 MX win
- 18 OFF
- 19 Lansing, Mich. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
Warriors over MX DQ NAWWTTC DARK \$10,800
- 20 Saginaw, Mich. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
Warriors over MX DQ NAWWTTC DARK \$32,000
- 21 Detroit, Mich.
MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$16,000
- 22 Cincinnati, Oh.
MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC \$16,000

RELEASE

Know all men by these presents that I, James Cornette, in consideration of the sum of \$26,585.07 dollars to me in hand paid, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do hereby release and forever discharge Jim Crockett Promotions, Inc. its wholly owned subsidiaries and individual shareholders, from any and every right, claim or demand which I now have or might otherwise hereafter have against them on account of, connected with or growing out of the following matters and things:

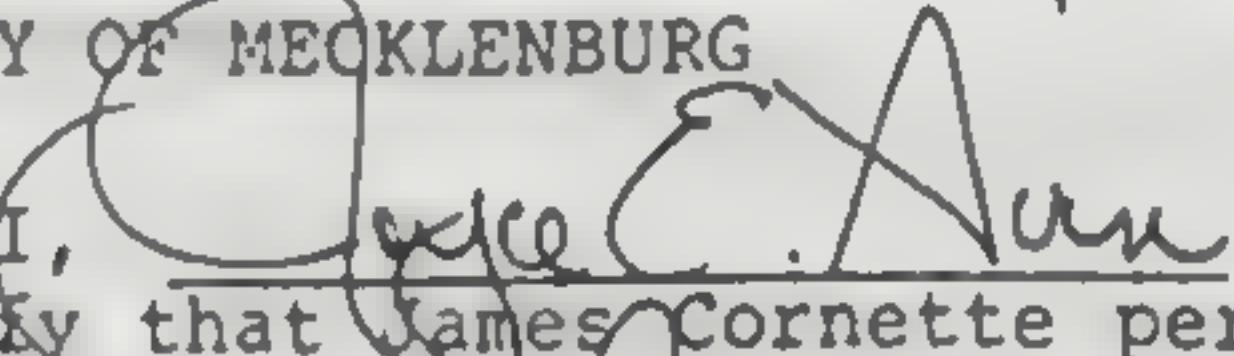
Any and all wrestling matches or events, whether live, taped for television broadcast, or on a pay-per-view television broadcast; or for any other wrestling or wrestling-related source, including, but not limited to, novelty and licensed merchandise sales, pay-per-view proceeds and personal appearances.

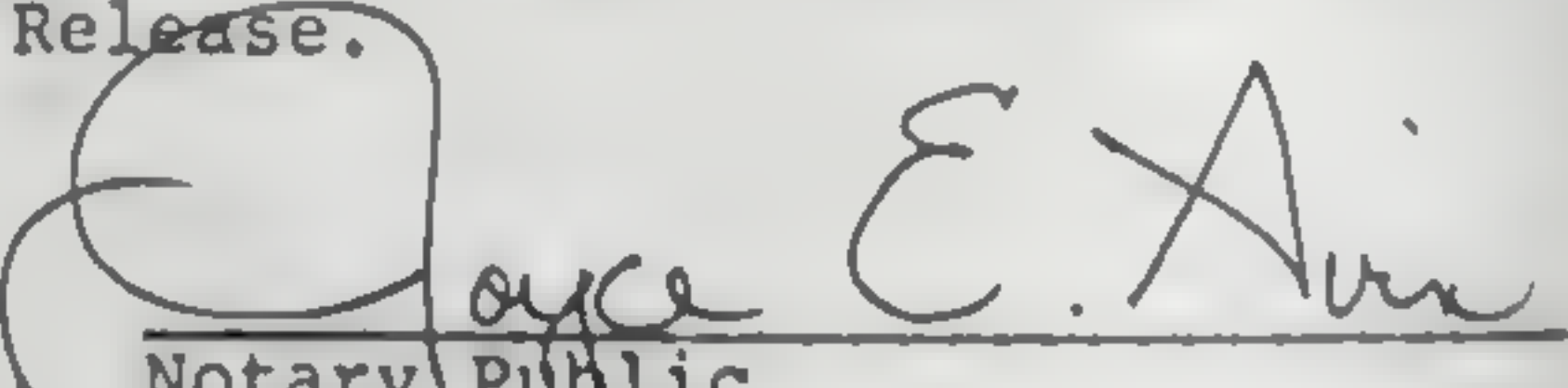
In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 8 day of November, 1988.


James Cornette

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

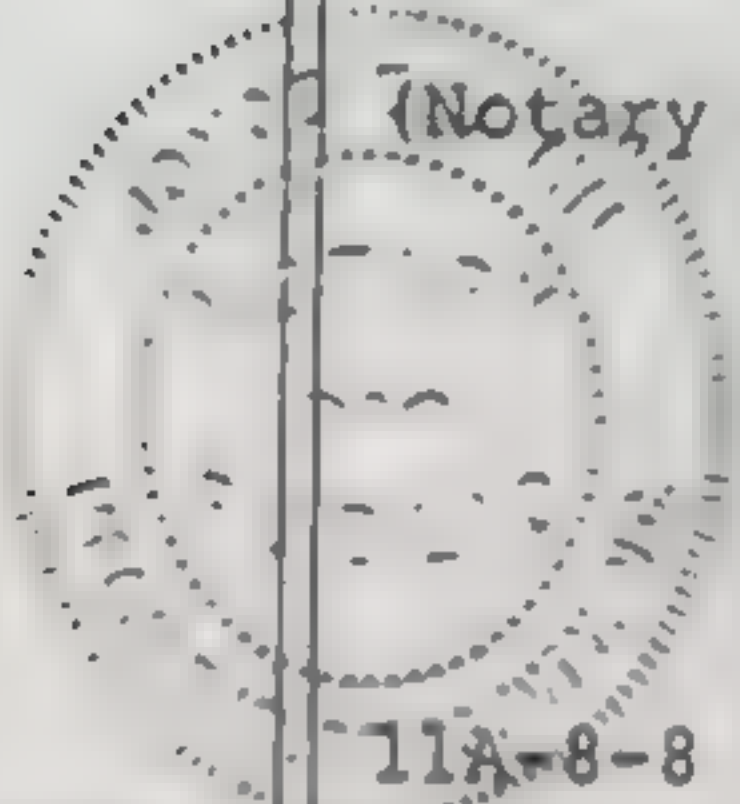
COUNTY OF MECKLENBURG

I, , a Notary Public, do hereby certify that James Cornette personally appeared before me this 8 day of November, 1988, and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing Release.


Notary Public

My commission expires: 6/1/93

(Notary Seal)



11A-8-8

MURCHISON, GUTHRIE,
DAVIS & HENDERSON
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
ONE NCHS PLAZA
SUITE 1200
CHARLOTTE, NC
28204

Forty Cents On The Dollar Is Better Than 40
Acres And A Mule (Above)
Hawk Press-Slams Bobby (Inset)



23	Charleston, W. Va.	MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC	
24	Little Rock, Ark.	MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC	\$23,000
25	Jackson, Tn.	MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC	\$30,000
26	Greenwood, Miss.	MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC	\$7,500
27	Jackson, Miss.	MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC	\$13,000
28	Baton Rouge, La.	MX over Warriors DQ NAWWTTC	\$25,000
29	New Orleans, La.	WARRIORS OVER MX TO WIN NAWWTTC	\$38,000

This match, taped for airing on TBS, was a rare double turn. The Warriors attacked the MX before the bell, injuring Eaton, and worked on Lane for the entire match until Eaton tagged in for a comeback and was doubleteamed and pinned. The MX were placed in the sympathetic babyface position, while the Warriors were seen as heels for the way they won. It was a last-ditch effort by Dusty to begin positioning all his talent for the TBS purchase, with the Warriors as heels to work with Dusty and partners, and the MX as full-fledged babyfaces for their upcoming program (more in a moment).

The match was somewhat successful at making the MX faces, less so at making the Warriors heels because of their large fan base, and both would be wasted in a matter of weeks by TBS' ownership and subsequent mismanagement of the company.

30	Alexandria, La.	Warriors over MX NAWWTTC	\$23,000
31	OFF		

MEET THE NEW BOSS, LOTS WORSE THAN THE OLD BOSS

On November 1, 1988, Turner Broadcasting's purchase of Jim Crockett Promotions became final and TBS assumed control. The wrestlers were thrilled that a major television company with almost limitless financing at its disposal was now in control, and could compete with the WWF on a level playing field.

This elation was somewhat short-lived as it soon became apparent that the TBS executives had no idea how to run a wrestling company, less incentive to even try, and their choices on bookers and executives to run the company would see World Championship

Wrestling, as it was now named, be a money losing company for the next 8 years, come perilously close to going under in the mid-'90's, make incredible profits under the Eric Bischoff regime in 1997-1999, and lose more money than any promotion ever, over \$60 million, in 2000, before being sold at a fire-sale price of less than \$4 million in 2001 to Vince McMahon. This was all unthinkable in November 1988 as TBS assumed control. One thing became apparent rather rapidly however, as related to the MX and JC personally.

Their \$225,000 per year contract, now being paid in regular two week installments by TBS rather than Crockett's "balloon payments", put a bullseye on their backs. As of November 1st, Crockett was \$66,000 short on the amount of money he should have paid Lane, Eaton and Cornette each under the terms of the contract. His attorneys settled with each member of the MX for about 40 cents on the dollar, or around \$26,000 each. But TBS, now paying each of the MX around \$4,400 per week, couldn't fathom the amount.

They knew Flair from 10 years of being a star on TBS, and they could see the Warriors and Luger being worth their contracts because of their impressive physiques. Not being privy to the Express' track record of drawing money and knowing absolutely nothing about pro wrestling, they soon began a campaign to run the Express off.

Dusty was fired as booker by late November over a controversial TBS angle involving blood, and Jim Crockett was named interim booker until they could find someone else. As well, TBS was on a search to find an executive vice-president, someone to run the business end of the company. Their choices for both positions in January would send the company on the road to ruin.

As related to the MX's performance, meanwhile, they were in the same position now that they were at the end of 1987, namely, no opponents to work a program with. JC relates what happened.

"In October", he remembers, "Tully & Arn had gone. We had vacated the US Tag Titles when we won the World Titles, because the rule then was that you couldn't hold two titles at once, you picked which to forfeit. We were scheduled to drop the World belts to the Road Warriors at the end of October. So where would we go from there?"

"Dennis Condrey had come back to the business that Summer, teaming with original partner Randy Rose

and managed by Paul E. Dangerously (Paul Heyman) as the Original Midnight Express in Verne Gagne's AWA. The AWA was on it's last legs at that point, but still had a slot on ESPN so a lot of people had seen them. I still spoke to Paul at that point, so I called him to see if they were interested in coming in to work with us. Obviously, he jumped at it, because that was his career break. Stan, Bobby and I went to Dusty and sold him on the idea of a Midnight vs. Midnight feud, and the idea I had for the introductory angle. My idea was for them to invade TBS TV and leave us all 3 in a bloody heap."

"Dusty, being a genius, said, "No kid--they've seen the Express bleed, but they've never seen you bleed. Keep it on you." He agreed to it, and the Original Midnight got a start date for November 2 at Atlanta TV."

"We came out on TV that night, did a promo about regrouping after the loss to the Warriors, and then Stan went in the ring for a singles match as Bobby was selling an injury. I got a phone call at the desk from an "unknown individual", and had an argument with him saying "Any time you want to settle this, come on."

Suddenly, from behind the curtain, Dangerously, Condrey and Rose hit the ring, and Jim Ross sold it like gold when he said, "They don't even work for WCW!" They laid Bobby and Stan out, Dangerously cracked me over the head with his gimmick, a cell phone which in 1988 was the size of a breadbox, and I bled buckets. The fans were stunned, the angle was made, we were turned full babyfaces, the subsequent promos were real and incredibly heated, and to this day it's one of the most memorable moments the MX ever had on TBS."

NOVEMBER 1988

1 Savannah, Ga. TV 2 tapes

Warriors over MX NAWWTTC DARK

2 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape--

Angle with Original Midnight

3 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape

This night remains a high point in JC's career--coming out to do an interview about the actions of the night before, carrying his white suit coat still drenched in blood, the studio fans were in the palm of his hand and accepted the MX, 3½ years as heels, as pure babyfaces as he vowed revenge on the OMX in one of the greatest interviews of his career.

4 Louisville, Ky. Lane drew Rogers 20:00 \$12,000

5 Dayton, Oh. Fulton over Lane

6-8 OFF

9 Greenwood, S.C. TV 2 tapes

Warriors over MX NAWWTTC DARK

10 Johnstown, Pa.

Warriors over MX NAWWTTC

11 Pittsburgh, Pa.

MX DDQ Dusty & Bam Bam Bigelow

12 Columbus, Oh.

Luger & Bigelow over MX

13 Huntington, W.Va.

Warriors over MX NAWWTTC

14 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape

15 Albany, Ga. Warriors over MX NAWWTTC

16 Raleigh, N.C.

Warriors over MX NAWWTTC CAGE

17 OFF

18 Washington, D.C. Rotunda over Lane

19 Philadelphia, Pa. Lane over Stallion

20-21 OFF

22 Sumter, S.C. TV 2 tapes

23 OFF

24 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes- 2 MX wins

(Eaton, suffering from a nagging knee injury, rejoins the team full time--Thanksgiving Day, traditionally the date of Starrcade and the single biggest-grossing day in the pro wrestling industry, is reduced to a studio TV taping with no revenue by WCW.)

25 Charlotte, N.C.

MX over Cruel Connection

26 Greensboro, N.C. MX over Cruel Connection



27 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape--1 MX win

28 Macon, Ga. TV 2 tapes-

Angle with JC & Dangerously

After the hot TV angle and several weeks of promos on all the TV's, the time had come for the first Midnight-Original Midnight arena match. They were all stunned when they arrived at the Showboat Pavillion in Las Vegas to learn they were on second and asked to go to a 20:00 draw, but they did it, and the response from the crowd of almost 4,000 was thunderous, with the OME beating the hell out of the MX after the time limit draw.

29 Las Vegas, Nev. MX drew OME 20:00

30 San Francisco, Ca. MX drew OME 20:00

DECEMBER 1988

1 Albuquerque, N.M. OME over MX DQ \$34,000

For the first time in their careers, the MX changed a finish the office had called after the San Francisco match, where the big city crowd wasn't as accepting of a time limit draw in a hot angle match as Vegas had been. On JC's instructions the ref called a DQ at 19:45 when the managers got involved. JJ Dillon, the office rep, told the MX they were suspended for changing a finish and to go home until they talked to Jim Crockett. JC responded they were going home and would be there until Jim Crockett called THEM..

The next morning, before catching a flight to Charlotte, JC called Ric Flair for advice and learned Dusty had been fired by TBS. On Ric's advice, JC called Crockett, who asked them to continue the tour and do the draw finishes until they returned to Atlanta TV, and JC agreed. They continued to do the afterbirth of the matches with the OME getting heavy heat on the MX after the time had expired.)

2 Amarillo, Tx. MX drew OME 20:00 \$30,000

3 Houston Tx. MX drew OME 20:00 \$14,000

4 Lubbock, Tx. MX drew OME 20:00

5 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

6 Columbus, Ga. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win \$13,000

7 CHATTANOOGA, TN

CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 4 LIVE ON TBS

Flair & Windham w/JJ over MX w/JC

(The only tag match ever with the MX vs. Flair & a partner was the 20:00 main event on this live TBS Special)

8 ATLANTA TBS TV 1 tape--1 MX win

Well, it didn't take long for the new WCW management to start making decisions that wouldn't endear

them to the Express. As of December 9, it was decreed that, as a cost-saving measure to be penny-wise and pound foolish, the managers would no longer be given plane tickets to the live arena events. This didn't horribly impact Gary Hart, Paul Jones or some of the other managers, but for Cornette and Dangerously, it was a big blow, since they were an integral part of the MX-OME angle that had just gotten started.

"How much freakin' money could they save on 5 or 6 plane tickets a week?" Cornette recalls. "I didn't almost bleed to death on TBS to sit home all the time, and Paul E. knew that he had just started and needed to go to the shows to get over. We both offered to trans ourselves, at our cost, to the shows to keep the angle going, and they actually refused to let us!"

"So these idiots were paying me about \$4,500 a week to sit home and NOT work, to save money! The teams went to the shows and had the matches, but without the whole package from TV it did nothing to help the angle. My records from this month are understandably incomplete, but I believe all these December towns were MX vs. OME. With the change of bookers, questionable finishes, and now the managers only making TV or driving shows close to home, the hottest thing we'd done in awhile was getting screwed for the second time in 3 months!"

9 Hampton, Va.

10 Philadelphia, Pa.

11 Richmond, Va.

12 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

13 Gainesville, Ga. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

14 OFF

15 Raleigh, N.C. TV 2tapes--

JC run in on OME (MX OFF)

16 Winston-Salem, NC. MX over Commandos

17-24 OFF

25 Greenville, S.C. 2pm

MX over OME

BHouse Stampede Battle Royal \$18,900

Charlotte, N.C. 8pm

MX over OME

BHouse Stampede Battle Royal \$44,000

26 NORFOLK, VA.

STARCADE '88--PAY PER VIEW

Midnight Express over Original Midnight

\$150,000

The annual tradition of Starcade as the big

***The Often-Imitated
Drop Toe Hold Elbow***



show of the year was over--moved from Thanksgiving to a Monday night after Christmas, the show drew only \$150,000 live and didn't set the world on fire on PPV. The MX went over in the match, with the OMI and Paul E. getting some heavy heat on Eaton, Lane and JC afterwards. Then the managers went home to sit out the Xmas week shows per the new rule.

27 Washington, D.C.

28 Chicago, Il.

29 Milwaukee, WI.

30 St. Louis, Mo.

31 OFF

As 1989 began, the "manager's rule" was rescinded, as much for all the complaints as because almost all the January shows were either TV tapings or driving trips around the WCW home base of Atlanta, but two key decisions were made that set the company on a path to disaster, one of the short term variety and one like a slowly-developing cancer--the hirings of George Scott as booker and Jim Herd as the new Executive Vice President of WCW.

These moves would both be made before the month was up, but as you can see from the January bookings and gates, significant changes had been made by TBS management to the company that had been doing large gates just 4 months earlier.

**THEY PAVED PARADISE
AND PUT UP A PARKING LOT
January 1989**

1 Atlanta, Ga.

OME over MX

JC wins Mgr's Bunkhouse over Gary Hart, JJ Dillon, Paul Jones, Paul E., Oliver Humperdink

MX in Bunkhouse Stampede

2 Columbus, Ga. TV 2 tapes

MX in Bunkhouse

\$11,300

3 Albany, Ga. TV 2 tapes--2 MX wins

Eaton over Randy Rose

Bunkhouse Stampede

4 ATLANTA TBS 2 Sat. night shows--1 MX win

5 ATLANTA TBS 2 Sat. morn. shows--JC co-host

6 Philadelphia--

MX & JC missed event due to plane cancellation.

(With Crockett promotions gone, so were the private planes, and with the whole crew flying commercial, it cut down on the insane double-shots, but also cut the amount of nights at home and left the talent at the mercy of cancellations and delays.)

7 Baltimore, Md.

JC won Mgr's Bunkhouse

MX in Bunkhouse Stampede

\$63,000

8 Fayetteville, N.C. 2PM MX over OMI

\$6,000



Greensboro, N.C. 8PM

MX over Russian Assassins

JC won Mgr's Bunkhouse

MX in Bunkhouse Stampede

9 Greenville, S.C.

MX & JC over Warriors & Ellering \$3,000

(Yes, that's correct--A \$3000 gate in Greenville)

10 Columbia, S.C. MX over OMI

JC won Mgr's Bunkhouse

MX in Bunkhouse Stampede \$23,000

11 Bassett, Va.

MX over OME \$6,800

12 Harrisonburg, Va.

MX over OME \$12,000

13 Hillsville, Va.

MX over OME \$11,000

14 Cherryville, N.C.

MX over OME \$7,000

15 OFF

16 Macon, Ga. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

OME over MX DARK

BHouse Stampede \$21,000

17 Savannah, Ga. TV 2 tapes

OME over MX DARK

Bunkhouse Stampede

At this TV taping, the end of the MX-OME

program was announced. Jim Crockett, in one of his final acts as interim booker before the hiring of George Scott, booked a 6 man tag with JC & MX vs. Paul E. and OME, with the loser of the fall to leave WCW, for the February PPV. Crockett didn't like Randy Rose's work and wanted to replace him, either ignorant to or uncaring of the fact that the Condrey-Rose team being the Original Midnight Express for REAL was the key to the whole thing.

At this point the MX & JC just sighed and accepted it, since the angle had been botched by the booking right after it started, and only the 6 individuals' hard work and strong TV performances had kept it as hot as it was.

18 ATLANTA TBS Sat. morn. show--

JC co-host. MX win

19 ATLANTA TBS Sat. night show--1 MX win

(The Saturday morning one hour show and Saturday night two hour show, which used to be taped in a 3 hour block on Sat. or Sun. mornings, now took Wed & Thurs nights to complete and took two more nights away from the house show schedule)

20 Georgetown, S.C. MX over OME \$7,600

21 Sumter, S.C. Eaton & JC over Rose & Paul E.

22 OFF

23 Elberton, Ga. MX over Russian Assassins

24 OFF		
25 Kenansville, N.C.	MX over OME	\$3,700
26 Washington, N.C.	MX over OME	\$7,000
27 Norfolk, Va.	MX DDQ OME	\$12,000
28 Richmond, Va.	OME over MX	
	Bunkhouse Stampede	\$36,000
29 Charleston, W.Va.	OME over MX	
	Bunkhouse Stampede	\$26,000
30 Chattanooga, Tn.	TV 3 tapes--1 MX win	
	MX DDQ OME DARK	
31 Marietta, Ga.	TV 3 tapes--1 MX win	

By February 1st, Herd had settled into his chair and George Scott had wandered into the locker room. JC describes it this way:

"No one had ever heard of Jim Herd before but we were all told he had a wrestling background. Come to find out, he had been most recently an executive with Pizza Hut in St. Louis, and his wrestling and TV background was that, in the 60's, he had been a station director at KPLR-TV in St. Louis when promoter Sam Muchnick had used the station to shoot his TV show.

The rumour, apparently true, is that he was hired because his wife was friends with the wife of Jack Petrik, the TBS exec then in charge of WCW. I swear I'm not making any of this up. The only piece of wrestling wisdom Herd garnered from Muchnick, one of the great promoters in history, was that TV interviews were bad, because St. Louis was the only promotion in the business that didn't rely on them, but Herd didn't know this because he had never SEEN any other promotions."

"George Scott, it would take a book to describe this guy. The wrestlers were polarized at first--Scott had a big reputation as the architect of changing the Mid-Atlantic area from a tag team territory to the Rolls Royce of the NWA in 1974-1980, bringing in all the top stars in the business from Flair on down. Scott worked as Vince McMahon's booker through the first Wrestlemania, even though Vince's booker in reality has always been himself."

"Scott had been completely out of the business for 5 years, and it soon became apparent that he was out of touch with the fact that the sport had changed and his favorite talent had aged in the last 5-10 years. As well, we soon got the opinion that his reputation as a great booker had come from bringing in the best talent in the sport and letting them do what they wanted."

"On a personal note, after our first couple of meetings with him, Bobby, Stan and I decided due to

his disconnected, confused and wishy-washy demeanor that he was either a complete moron or in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. These were our leaders, folks."

FEBRUARY 1989

1 ATLANTA TBS TV Sat am & pm--2 MX wins	
2 ATLANTA TBS TV Sat am & pm--1 MX win	
3-5 Off	
6 Spartanburg, S.C.	MX over Russian Assassins
7 Sumter, S.C.	MX over Commandos
8 Raleigh, N.C.	MX over Commandos
	Bunkhouse Stampede \$21,000
9 Fayetteville, N.C.	MX over Russians
	Bunkhouse Stampede
10 Hampton, Va.	MX over Commandos
	Bunkhouse Stampede
11 OFF	
12 ATLANTA TBS TV am 2 tapes--1 MX win	
Atlanta Omni 8pm	
	Lane over Russian #1
	Eaton over Ray Candy DQ
13 Columbus, Ga. TV	3 tapes--1 MX win
14 Gainesville, Ga. TV	3 tapes--1 MX win
15 Cleveland, Oh.	

TBS CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 5

MX over Russian Assassins

16 OFF	
17 Athens, Ga.	
	MX over Randy Rose & George South
	(Not paying any attention to what they were doing, WCW booked Dennis Condrey in Athens, Ga., with 2 days off before and two days off after, having to fly in from Denver. He didn't, and he had his own plans for the big "loser leaves WCW" match as well.)
18 OFF	
19 Anderson, S.C.	MX over Assassins
20 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS	

CHI-TOWN RUMBLE LIVE ON PPV

MX & JC over Rose, Dangerously & Jack Victory

The day of the big blowoff came, but Dennis Condrey didn't. Having had his own meeting with George Scott, Dennis had said when he made the deal to come in for this program, nobody said anything about a Loser Leaves Match, or giving him a new partner. Scott's reply was that HE wasn't the one Condrey had made the deal with, Crockett had booked the match, and if it was up to HIM he'd have kept the Original Midnight and let the MX & JC go!



Dennis saw this whole thing was going nowhere fast, and swerved all of them by not showing up. They couldn't pin Rose, the original plan, because that would have been too obvious with no Condrey. They put the unmasked Russian Assassin #2, Jack Victory, in the match as Paul E's secret weapon, and beat him, then found a loophole to bring him back and killed the whole stipulation.

The one great move Scott had made was to bring old Mid Atlantic favorite Ricky Steamboat back to the NWA, and on this night he defeated Ric Flair for the NWA Title in the first of their classic 1989 best of 3 series. This was somewhat offset by his signing of the Iron Sheik, past his prime even in 1989. In the classic example of WCW's talent mismanagement, the Sheik was signed for \$100,000 per year, and barely two months later was sent home.

Paying him for the rest of the year, they forgot to send him a termination notice, his contract rolled over, and they had to pay him for another year to sit at home. Sheik made \$200,000 over two years for working about 2 months' time. By the way, the gate on this Chicago extravaganza was \$69,700.

21 Forest City, N.C. MX over Rose & Rip Morgan

22-23 OFF

24 Walterboro, S.C. MX over Rose & Morgan \$3,500

25 Newton, N.C. MX over Rose & Morgan \$4,600

26 OFF

27 Macon, Ga. TV 2 tapes-1 MX win

28 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes-1 MX win

As of March 1st the state of the MX was this--they were now a full-fledged babyface team, and popular. JC was a babyface manager, something many said couldn't be done, and he had not only pulled it off but had fun doing it. They were each making around

\$4,500 per week, for the lightest schedule they'd ever worked. But things were far from rosy--their contracts were up in April, and they knew they'd be asked to take a big cut.

The house show gates were miserable everywhere, especially the tank towns they'd been booked in with little or no promotion. Their list of prospective opponents was down to nil, when the decision was made to bring in the Samoan Swat Team, Samu & Fatu, as Paul E's new team, and they were slated to work against the MX.

With all this going on, the MX & JC had a meeting with George Scott to see what his plans were before talking to Herd to renegotiate.

"It was an interesting meeting," JC recalls "It became obvious to us after a few minutes George Scott had never even SEEN us before he walked in the WCW door. With the exception of Flair and the Road Warriors, we were really the last talent there that had a track record of drawing money, but when we asked him what his plans were for us he said "I really don't know what I'm gonna do with you guys." It was like talking to a zombie. After that, and our first few matches with the SST, we saw where this was headed."

"The Samoans were very athletic big men, and did some cool moves, so it was okay if you worked their match. Unfortunately, their match was the same every night--sell very little, only take bumps for each others' miscues, beat up the babyfaces and then beat them. Bobby, Stan and I decided that instead of renegotiating our contracts, we would give our notice, take a rest, and sooner or later, Scott would fail and get fired. That's what we did, only we didn't know how right we were."

MARCH 1989

1 ATLANTA TBS TV	1 tape--1 MX win	
2 ATLANTA TBS TV	1 tape--1 MX win	
3 Tallahassee, Fla.	MX over SST DQ	\$11,000
4 Jacksonville, Fla.	SST over MX	
5-9	OFF	
10 Greenville, S.C.	SST over MX	
11 Greensboro, N.C.	SST over MX	
12 Atlanta, Ga.	SST over MX	\$49,000
13 Augusta, Ga. TV	2 tapes--1 MX win	
14 Albany, Ga. TV	2 tapes--1 MX win	
15	OFF	
16 ATLANTA TV	1 tape--1 MX win	
17-19	OFF	
20 Fayetteville, N.C.	SST over MX	
21 Columbia, S.C.	SST over MX	\$7,800
22 Rocky Mount, Va.	SST over MX	
23 Harrisonburg, Va.	SST over MX	\$7,000
24 Amherst, Va.	SST over MX	
25 Rockingham, N.C.	SST over MX	
26	OFF	
27 Chattanooga, Tn.	Jack Victory over Eaton	\$9,800
28 Gainesville, Ga.	Victory over Eaton	
29-30	OFF	
31 Baltimore, Md.		
	K. Sullivan & D.Spivey over MX	\$69,000

APRIL 1989

1 Richmond, Va.	Great Muta over Eaton	
	Butch Reed over Lane	
2 New Orleans, La.--SUPERDOME--		
	TBS CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 6	
	SST over MX	

George Scott meets his Waterloo. In two months as booker, Scott had signed over-the-hill or useless talent, made his son a referee/locker room stooge, made the son of an old crony a break-dancing babyface that was booed out of every building, and sent the TV ratings into the toilet, but this was the final straw. This Clash was the latest shot fired in the wrestling war, a live special on TBS opposite Wrestlemania 5 on PPV, but it turned out to be a misfire.

Scott had instructed everyone NOT to promote the Clash on TV because it would "hurt the house shows", and as a result, it was the lowest rated Clash to date and drew barely 3,000 fans to the Superdome itself.

The MX & JC served their pennance by doing their best to put the SST over in the same blah match,

and were back at their hotel in time to watch the classic 2/3 fall, 58:00 rematch between Flair and Steamboat that was designed to be WCW's in-ring proof of superiority to the WWF. When the TBS executives learned that it was, but nobody saw it, Scott was fired immediately.

A new booking committee, headed by Jim Ross, was put in place, and they immediately asked the MX & JC to rescind their notice and stay on. The boys were tired, frustrated, and looking forward to a vacation, so JC made a deal with Ross. JC would do a promo on TV that the MX were leaving WCW to let "injuries heal and come out of their slump", and that they wouldn't "come back unless we can once again be the greatest tag team in wrestling."

In reality, they wanted the fans to forget the way they had been used and come back with a fresh push. They would finish their dates a week early, be paid on their current contracts until negotiating new ones, and be paid on the new ones until starting back in June. This sounded great until JC had his first private meeting with Jim Herd.

3-4	OFF	
5 Hampton, S.C.	MX & JC over SST & Paul E.	
6	OFF	
7 Goose Creek, S.C.	MX & JC over SST & Paul E.	\$7,500
8 Gaffney, S.C.	MX & JC over SST & Paul E.	\$1,740
9 Atlanta, Ga.	SST over MX	
APRIL 10-MAY 4	OFF	

WE HAVE HERD ENOUGH

The MX & JC greatly enjoyed the longest vacation they'd had in over 6 years in JC's case, and a decade in Eaton and Lane's. On May 5, 1989, JC went to Atlanta to meet with Jim Herd about their new contracts. It was to be the start of a very rocky relationship. Herd's management style was described as "bombastic", and he probably intimidated CPA's wearing 3 piece suits, but in wrestling he was beginning to be viewed as an idiot playing tough guy who engendered more confrontation than cooperation.

You could endure an ass chewing from a Bill Watts or a Dusty Rhodes, because you knew they had a proven track record and knew what they were doing. Herd would make an idiot out of himself every time he opened his mouth about pro wrestling. This was yet to be known to JC as he went into the meeting excited

about working out new deals for the team.

"I went in and told him in all honesty", JC remembers, "that the deals we had signed with Crockett were out of line with what the other talent was making and what the business was doing, and we were ready to take a cut in pay to come back and help the company. He offered us not a cut but an amputation--\$75,000 each for Bobby & Stan, and \$100,000 for me to manage and also do color commentary on TV. I was shocked, and I told him that even though Scott's booking and the aborted programs had damaged the team in the fan's eyes, just 6 months before that we had been World Tag Champions, were still the best in-ring team in the company, had a track record of drawing money for years, had been loyal, and after a two month rest could come back in a good spot and contribute again."

"The other top heels in the company, except Flair, were making about \$150,000, and the top faces, except the Warriors, Luger & Sting, the same. Herd told me that was the offer, and seeing that he wasn't going to back up the Brink's truck for us, I told him I'd take the 100, but the MX wouldn't take less than 150 and if they didn't sign, I wasn't either."

"I left for Charlotte with no deal, but Herd said

he would call after thinking about it. So a series of calls ensued which illustrated this moron's negotiating talent. He'd call back with a slight increase, not just for Bobby & Stan, but all 3 of us, and I'd turn it down each time saying I was fine with my offer, but the MX needed 150.

Apparently not understanding honesty in a business deal, Herd kept upping all 3 of us in small increments, until finally making an absolute last offer of 125 for Bobby & Stan, and 150 for me. We figured with the new committee behind us, and the easier schedule, we'd better take the deal and we'd have the opportunity to get over again, but the lunatic gave me 50 grand he didn't have to just because he wasn't listening."

The negotiations ended with the start of tension between Herd and JC, the MX somewhat insulted they'd had to struggle to get comparable money to some lesser talents, and Herd unable to understand why JC wanted to continue managing the best tag team in the world, once remarking to Jim Ross that he "hadn't seen loyalty like that since Korea."

The contracts were signed on May 16, 1989, with the understanding that the three would begin being paid on that date, be free to honor the bookings



With Dr. Mark Curtis in Youngstown

they had made when they assumed they'd be gone from the company, and return to WCW as surprise entrants in the upcoming World Tag Title tournament.

MAY 1989

5-11 OFF

12 Youngstown, Oh.

MX over Badd Company w/Mark Curtis \$10,000

The only meeting between the MX and Pat Tanaka and Paul Diamond, the AWA's top heel team of the late '80's, was also the first time JC got to manage opposite his longtime friend, Brian Hildebrand, AKA Mark Curtis. Curtis was a top independent manager and JC's top ref and right hand man in SMW in the '90's. He was also a top WCW ref until his death from cancer in 1999.

13 Baltimore, Md.

MX & JC personal appearance

14 Philadelphia, Pa.

MX & JC personal appearance

(The team had gained great popularity with the budding "smart fan" population in the Northeast, so promoter Joel Goodhart brought them up for weekend brunches with the fans.)

15-18 OFF

19 Birmingham, Al.

MX over Jimmy Golden & Storm Trooper

20 Dothan, Al.

MX over Golden & Trooper

(Continental Wrestling, running Alabama and East Tennessee, was one of the few remaining regional territories, and with Bill Dundee booking there, the MX agreed to a few dates to try to help their business.)

21-23 OFF

24 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

WTTC Tournament Match

MX over Butch Reed & Raider

(TBS TV was now being taped at Center Stage, a 900 seat theatre in downtown Atlanta. The MX returned as a surprise to an incredible reaction from the fans, which was gratifying to the MX that at least the paying customers had missed them. They were scheduled to defeat Reed and Ron Simmons in a first round match, but Simmons was off with an injury.)

25 OFF

26 Knoxville, Tn.

J. Golden & Mongolian Stomper over MX \$10,000

27 Johnson City, Tn.

Golden & Stomper over MX

(The last 2 dates for Continental saw JC man-

age the MX opposite Tennessee legend Ron Wright, who would be an important part of SMW a few years later, and Golden & Stomper would play major roles there as well.)

28-31 OFF

JUNE 1989

1-6 OFF

7 ATLANTA TBS 1 tape--1 MX win

MX over New Zealand Militia DARK

8-13 OFF

14 Ft. Bragg, N.C.

TBS CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 7

MX over SST Semi-Finals WTTC Tournament

Freebirds (Hayes & Garvin) over MX Finals

On their live TBS redebut, the MX defeated the SST in the semifinals, then lost to the new Freebirds, Michael Hayes & Jimmy Garvin, in the finals after Paul E. knocked JC out with a loaded tennis racket, and Terry Gordy ran in and powerbombed Eaton.

15 Augusta, Ga. TBS TV 1 tape--1 MX win

Dr. Death DDQ Terry Gordy

(At this TV JC began managing Dr. Death Steve Williams, an old Mid-South friend, in 6 man tags vs. the Freebirds and some singles matches as well.)

16 Johnstown, Pa.

MX over Reed & Simmons \$5,500

17 Harrisonburg, Va.

MX over Reed & Simmons \$5,400

18 Charleston, W.Va.

MX over Reed & Simmons \$8,000

19 Macon, Ga. TV 2 tapes--1 MX match

20 Savannah, Ga. TV 2 tapes

21 ATLANTA TBS TV

MX & Doc over ? & brawl with Birds

Birds over MX COR DARK

1989 GREAT AMERICAN BASH ON TOUR

--OR--

WHAT IF THEY GAVE A WAR AND NOBODY CAME??

For the few wrestlers still left in WCW who had experienced the thrill of the Bash tour, it was more an occasion for mourning as the last Bash tour got underway, since WCW was still suffering from the low TV ratings left over from the George Scott

*Triumphant Over Paul E.
At The Bash PPV*



regime. Promotion of the live events had been mostly botched for the previous 6 months of the WCW ownership, the fans in the core territory had been left feeling insulted or abandoned by the changes in the schedule and product, and most of the new talent just wasn't clicking. In the ring, WCW's product was still superior to WWF's, as at the May PPV Flair had regained the NWA Title from Steamboat in their best match ever, and begun a program with Terry Funk that would last until November, but this company as a whole just couldn't buy a break with the constant booking changes and lack of leadership.

22 LANDOVER, MD.

--CAPITOL CENTRE--BASH

MX over Simmons & Al Greene \$47,000

23 NEW HAVEN, CT.--THE COLISEUM--BASH

MX over Simmons & Bill Irwin

24 Philadelphia, Pa.

MX over Greene & Simmons \$46,000

(This "regular" house show actually outdrew the Philly Bash in July.)

25 PITTSBURGH, PA.--CIVIC ARENA--BASH

MX over Greene & Simmons \$35,000

26 Raleigh, N.C. MX over Simmons & Greene

27 GREENVILLE, S.C. --AUDITORIUM--BASH

MX & Doc over FreeBirds DQ \$30,000

28 GREENSBORO, N.C.--COLISEUM--BASH

MX over Freebirds DQ NWA/TTC \$37,000
(Yes, \$19,000 for the Bash in Greensboro--one week after a \$100,000 house was a disappointment, the draws it's all-time low crowd, and being on a Wednesday night for the first time in the city's history didn't help.)

29-30 OFF

JULY 1989

1 CHARLOTTE, N.C.--NEW COLISEUM--BASH

MX over Freebirds DQ NWA/TTC \$37,000

2 ATLANTA, GA.--THE OMNI--BASH

Freebirds over MX NWA/TTC

3 Columbia, S.C. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

MX & Doc over 3 Freebirds

Birds over MX NWA/TTC DARK

4 Fayetteville, N.C. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

5 CHARLESTON, S.C. --THE CITADEL--BASH

Freebirds over MX & Doc

6 Marietta, Ga. TBS TV 2 tapes--

MX over N.Z. Militia

7 ROANOKE, VA.--CIVIC CENTER--BASH

Freebirds over MX & Doc

8 BOSTON, MASS.--BOSTON GARDEN--BASH

Freebirds over MX & Doc \$57,000

In the MX's career, they had very few "incidents" with opponents--this was one. Hayes and

Garvin were trying to recreate the magic of the "old" Freebirds, and felt if they sold little and took most of the matches, they would somehow get over stronger. Garvin, who had spent the past 6 years of his career being a pretty-boy coward heel, was suddenly trying to work like a tough guy at 5'10 and 210 pounds, and was on "supplements" trying to get bigger, leading to temper issues. Terry Gordy was as always the best working big man in the business, but was only working WCW dates in between his lucrative Japanese tours, and so was somewhat detached from Hayes and Garvin's political machinations.

In this match, the Birds sold little, got a long heat on Eaton, won the match fairly cleanly, and then, without warning, jumped the MX to try to beat them up further. Dr. Death grabbed one of the old wooden Garden chairs to run them off, and Garvin, incredibly, wouldn't back up from a chair-wielding Steve Williams. Doc responded by whacking Garvin over the head full force with the chair at least 6 times, as pieces of the chair went flying, and with every landing Garvin screaming "FUCK" and Doc responding "FUCK WITH ME".

The Birds ran to the locker room, where the MX, Doc & JC followed, and an ugly scene was narrowly averted when two things happened--Gordy showed an unwillingness to get physical over such horseshit, and of all people, Bobby Eaton spoke up, yelling "We're not just here to get you guys over!"

The sight of Bobby Eaton being angry for the first time in memory snapped everyone out of it, and the two contingents went to separate rooms, avoiding what could have been one of the all-time classic locker room brawls. The only damage was to Garvin, who suffered facial and head lacerations, and bone chips in his elbows from trying to block the blows.

9 OFF--Providence, R.I.

(Show cancelled due to lack of ticket sales.)

10 **SPRINGFIELD, MASS.**

--CIVIC CENTER--BASH

MX over Garvin & Gordy (rev.dec) \$11,000

11 Chicago

(MX & JC missed event due to flight cancellation.)

12 Carbondale, Ill. Freebirds over MX & Doc \$12,000

13 **JACKSON, TN--THE COLISEUM--BASH**

Freebirds over MX & Doc \$11,000

14 **MEMPHIS, TN.**

--MID-SOUTH COLISEUM--BASH

Freebirds over MX & Doc \$25,000

15 **RICHMOND, VA.**

150

--COLISEUM--BASH

Freebirds over MX & Doc

16 Ft. Worth, Tx. TV 2 tapes

Freebirds over MX NWA/TTC DARK

17 **LUBBOCK, TX. --COLISEUM--BASH**

MX & Doc over Freebirds \$25,000

18 Amarillo, Tx. TV 2 tapes--2 MX wins

MX & Doc over Freebirds DARK

19-20 OFF

21 Dayton, Oh. MX over N.Z. Militia

22 **PHILADELPHIA--CIVIC CENTER--BASH**

MX, Warriors & Doc over Freebirds & Samoans

Badstreet Match \$39,000

(Besides this event drawing only \$39,000 in Philly, JC injured his left knee jumping off the ring to avoid a table being thrown by Gordy, and went into the next day's PPV with a serious handicap.)

23 **BALTIMORE, MD.**

--THE ARENA--

1989 GREAT AMERICAN BASH ON PPV

JC over Dangerously Tuxedo Match

MX, Doc & Warriors over Freebirds and Samoans

WAR GAMES \$188,000(SO)

Unable to bend his swollen left knee, but knowing this was his only chance to get a high profile win over Paul E. and finish their aborted program started 8 months before, JC wrapped his knee up tight, scrounged 3 pain pills from the locker room (in the days before that was an easy thing to do), and went out to have what, all things considered, was a pretty good match for two non-wrestlers. It got over with the Baltimore crowd, then JC took the next 3 days off to go home and have over 250 CC's of blood drained off the knee.

The Bash drew a sellout 13,000 paying \$188,000 with the main event the first Flair-Funk match, and was the success of the year for WCW.

24 Altoona, Pa. MX match

25 Wilmington, N.C. MX match

26 Jacksonville, Fla. MX match

27 **TALLAHASSEE, FLA.**

--CIVIC CENTER--BASH

MX & Doc over Freebirds

28 **ORLANDO, FLA.--BASH**

Eaton, Doc & Tommy Rich over Birds

29 **TAMPA, FLA.--BASH**

Eaton, Doc & T. Rich over Birds

30 **MIAMI, FLA. --BASH**

Samoans & Gordy over Eaton, Doc & Rich

(Due to a pending lawsuit Stan Lane was

unable to work these dates)

31 NEW ORLEANS, LA.

-DOWNTOWN AUDITORIUM--BASH
(TV taping) MX over N.Z. Militia COR

AUGUST 1989

1 BATON ROUGE, LA. --CENTROPLEX--BASH
(TV) MX over Simmons & Trent Knight
MX & Doc over Freebirds DARK

2 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

3 LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

-BARTON COLISEUM--BASH

Freebirds over MX COR NWAWTTC \$22,000

4 KANSAS CITY, MO.

-KEMPER ARENA--BASH

Freebirds over MX COR NWAWTTC \$18,000

5 ST. LOUIS, MO.--THE ARENA--BASH

Freebirds over MX NWAWTTC

6 ATLANTA, GA. --THE OMNI--BASH

MX, Doc & Warriors over Freebirds & Samoans
WAR GAMES \$89,000

(The last Bash tour ends with a whimper with barely 7,500 paying \$89,000 for a War Games match in WCW's home base. Many gates at this point were not even reported to talent, as some were embarrassing and all were immaterial anyway as all wrestlers were making only their minimum guarantees. JC still tried to keep records when possible to track business, but most everyone else was past caring.)

7-13 OFF

TO BE THE MAN,
YOU HAVE TO BOOK THE MAN

In late summer 1989 WCW was in shambles and it's top star, Ric Flair, was pissed. The Bash tour's dismal performance at the gate was not representative of the in-ring efforts by Flair and Funk, nor the other top WCW talent. The TV ratings, which had tanked under George Scott, were still suffering with a week in June being the rock bottom--On 6/10/89, WCW Saturday night had done a 1.9 rating, 4.3 share and was seen in 933,000 homes.

On 6/11/89, the Sunday night TBS Main Event had scored a 1.1/2.5, in 540,000 homes, and the 6-14-89 Clash had posted a 3.8/6.6 in 1.9 million homes, the lowest Clash ever. Little upward movement had been gained since then.

Flair felt with a still-strong crew of talent positioned correctly, and the major TV outlets and finan-

cial backing WCW had, there was no reason for the depths the company had reached, and demanded the position of booker. He was given the spot and promised full control over the wrestling product by Herd but was one of the first of many to learn that under Jim Herd's leadership, a quality product wouldn't be easy to achieve, and with WCW's office and promotional staff, that quality product would have little effect on revenue.

The MX's future, however, was looking up--Flair called JC and told him that he wanted him on the booking committee as soon as he could open a spot, and that the MX would be figured back into the cards in a more prominent position with an upcoming heel turn which they now desperately needed. Neither Flair or JC knew at that time to what extent Herd was willing to go to interfere with any booking plans Flair made.

14 Charleston, W.Va. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
Birds over MX NWAWTTC

15 Cleveland, Oh. TV 2 tapes
Eaton over Garvin

16 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

17 Florence, S.C. Freebirds over MX NWAWTTC

18 Greensboro, N.C. Freebirds over MX NWAWTTC

19 Charlotte, N.C.
MX over Freebirds DQ NWAWTTC \$59,000

20 Chicago, Ill.
Freebirds over MX NWAWTTC \$43,000

21 Indianapolis, Ind.
Freebirds over MX NWAWTTC

22 Greenville, S.C. TV 2 tapes
MX over State Patrol
Freebirds over MX NWAWTTC DARK \$42,900

23 Bluefield, W.Va.
Freebirds over MX NWAWTTC \$19,000

24 Raleigh, N.C.
Freebirds over MX NWAWTTC

25 Baltimore, Md.
Eaton DCOR Danny Spivey \$60,000

26 Philadelphia, Pa.
Skyscrapers over MX \$43,000

(The worst matches in the MX's careers took place over the next few months vs. the Skyscrapers--Sid Vicious and Danny Spivey. Sid was green, but at 6'9" and a jacked-up 325 pounds, at least looked great. Spivey was 6'7", 300 pounds with a horrible physique and was practically immobile with bad knees. All they wanted to do was work like giants and eat up their

TO: Jack Petrik
Jim Herd

FR: Bob Levi
Jeff Carr

RE: Wrestling Guidelines

DA: October 6, 1989

TBS continues to maintain an all family programming strategy. This philosophy extends through all dayparts and categories.

The TBS wrestling programs and promos must be consistent with our on-air standards. Programs/promos which do not adhere to these standards must be edited or removed from the schedule. It is our intent to encourage exciting and provocative wrestling shows which will garner high ratings. It is in this spirit that we have designed the attached policy.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

TBS WRESTLING GUIDELINES

- A. No blood is to be allowed. Any accidental bleeding that occurs in a live performance will be covered by wide shots. Any subsequent replays in future telecasts must be edited or removed from the program.
- B. Gratuitously violent and sadistic acts to people and/or animals are to be excluded from TBS broadcasts. Examples include; use of a plastic bag to smother a person, lighting someone on fire, a blunt instrument being used repeatedly with the intent of breaking an arm, leg, etc., incessant kicking/beating of an individual (Scott Steiner mugging).
- C. Violent and sadistic verbal threats are unacceptable. We do not allow use of profanity or religious slurs. References made to drug and alcohol use are not allowed unless it is designed to educate and inform viewers in a positive manner.
- D. Wrestling costumes must be consistent with our all family viewing standards. Attire may be provocative and entertaining, but may not be either lewd or abusive in design.

TBS decrees that a television show about gratuitous violence cannot include gratuitous violence.

babyface opponents, and neither the MX nor any other face team was ever able to get a truly good match out of them. The MX suffered through these bouts and looked forward to their upcoming heel turn.

27 New Haven, Ct.

Skyscrapers over MX \$33,000

28 Gainesville, Ga. TV 2 tapes

MX over N.Z. Militia

29 OFF

30 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

31 Shreveport, La. Skyscrapers over MX \$20,000

SEPTEMBER 1989

1 Fayetteville, N.C.

MX over N.Z. Militia \$21,000

2 Myrtle Beach, S.C.

MX over N.Z. Militia \$18,000

3 Atlanta, Ga.

Freebirds over MX NAWTTC \$93,000

4 Nashville, Tn.

Freebirds over MX NAWTTC

5 Huntsville, Al.

Freebirds over MX NAWTTC \$23,000

6 Alexandria, La.

Freebirds over MX NAWTTC

7 Biloxi, Miss.

Freebirds over MX NAWTTC

8 Miami, Fla.

Eaton & Brad Armstrong over Birds DQ

JC over Dangerously \$15,000

9 Palmetto, Fla. Eaton over Hayes

JC over Dangerously \$15,700

10 Ft. Pierce, Fla. Freebirds over MX

JC over Dangerously

11 Greenwood, S.C. TV--4 tapes

Hayes over Lane DQ

Dick Slater over Eaton

1 MX win, 1 Dynamic Dudes win,

Freebirds over MX DARK

(MX work four times and JC five times in one night)

12 COLUMBIA, S.C.

TBS CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 8

The MX were off this show--JC did color with Jim Ross. For the next 6 months, JC would co-host at least one of the three weekly TBS shows each week.

THE GANG THAT COULDN'T SHOOT STRAIGHT--INSIDE THE WCW BOOKING COMMITTEE

The first week of September came and Flair made good on his offer to bring JC on board the booking committee. "I don't know if it was over Herd's objections", Cornette explains, "but he sure didn't seem happy to see me. Then again, the old prick never seemed happy to see ANYbody."

For the princely sum of \$300 per week on top of his wrestling contract, JC got to travel to either Atlanta or a major market airport once a week in between house shows, and meet with the booking committee and Herd. Of course, nothing really ever got done at these meetings except arguing and infighting, mostly due to Herd, but Herd also insisted on having the meetings, so apparently he liked it that way.

"It was my first booking job, I loved working with Flair and Kevin Sullivan, and I learned a lot from them", JC said, "but suffice it to say that the stress-related stomach problems I have off and on to this day erupted from trying to co-exist with Herd." The booking committee is a book in itself, but JC gives a brief rundown of the players and the lay of the land as of his starting date.

"Flair was the head booker, which was supposed to mean he had control over the wrestling product, but Herd never came through with that promise in total. Some things were easier for Ric to get past him than others, but it was usually a struggle. Ric decided the direction, who would work with who, the major angles, the TV main events, the big picture. Then he would hand it off to Kevin Sullivan and I to sketch out. Kevin and I would get together at the house shows, in the car or on the phone, and polish the details."

"Kevin had been a main event player for almost 20 years, booked various places, especially Florida, learned from Eddie Graham himself and had great insight. He taught me a lot. Then, basically because I was an habitual note-taker and loved actually sketching out the TV formats, I would get everything together, write out the formats, and fax them to the office to be typed up and copied. Same process with the house show cards. I got input with them, and it was easy to suggest ideas to Ric or Kevin because they would either like them, or tell me what was wrong with them, without making me feel like a goof. That was Herd's job, but it never bothered me too much because they actually knew what they were talking about and he didn't."

"The rest of the committee at the time--Jody

Hamilton, who was a wrestling legend as the Assassin, worked in the office daily, and handled the booking of the TV job guys, made sure the rings got to the towns, and was supposed to be at the meetings to provide his experience in the discussions, but this didn't work too well. Jody's style was not to be loud or confrontational, so he didn't haggle with Herd a lot when he went off on his tirades, and because of that I think Flair thought he was on "their side", thus Jody was kind of caught in the middle and had nobody listening."

"Jim Ross, who remains a good friend of mine to this day and who I have the utmost personal and professional respect for, was in an almost unwinnable position as well. He served several times as head of the committee before and after this point, and had a lot of ideas, but they weren't on the same page as Ric's very often."

"I think Ric discounted a lot of what JR had done because business had been bad during that point, and Ric was yet to realize business was going to be bad no matter WHO was in charge of booking as long as Herd and TBS were in control of everything. JR was the lead announcer, worked in the office full-time, and tried as a professional to have a cordial relationship with Herd. This made him suspect to the "boys" who were on the road all the time and only in the office once a week."

"Herd pitted JR against Flair and vice versa, with tactics like this that drove Ric crazy--once the TV formats were faxed in to be typed and copied, Herd would instruct JR to change all the live interviews to 30 second pretapes. Ric would sit down at the TV production meetings and see the formats weren't what we wrote. Of course, JR was there but Herd wasn't, and it became "JR changed it", then Ric would get hot, have me get my originals out and change it back. Incessant little tactics of Herd's like this prevented Ric and JR from fully working together."

"Jim Barnett was listed as a consultant. It would take a phone book to recount the successes, innovations and accomplishments of Barnett as one of the two or three most powerful and successful pro wrestling promoters of the last 50 years. Because of his contacts, his eye for talent, the promotions he had run all over the world, he was a legend. He was the reason wrestling was on TBS to begin with. He wasn't a booker, he always employed a good one, (or a bad one for a short period before firing him), but he was considered a wise old wizard. The down side was at

this point, he was in his '60's, and seemed to me to be at that cranky point in his life where he didn't like much of anything."

"In addition, he knew, or thought he knew, that this was his last paying job in the sport and seemed more into saying things that made Herd happy to keep the check coming. As well, he always had a penchant for drama and gossip, and didn't seem too upset when the other guys were all at each other's throats."

"During the time I spent on the committee, a few others were added, both shortly before I quit. One was Ole Anderson, who whether you liked him or not, was always entertaining. I questioned a lot that Ole did, especially in Summer 1990 when he was named booker after Ric had quit, but the great thing about Ole was it was never dull when he was around. Once again, he didn't get a lot through when Ric had the seat, but his confrontations with Herd were priceless."

"After he "retired" from the ring after his run with Flair, Terry Funk was brought on. As an all-time great in the ring, a booker, promoter, promo genius and one of my childhood idols, you would have thought Terry would make a big contribution, but once again, he didn't want to be in constant confrontations with people. If he agreed with Herd, Ric would scoff, if he agreed with Ric, Herd would scoff, if he came up with his own ideas the rest of us didn't know whether to agree or not because it might get on the wrong side of somebody else, and I think Terry just sat back and shook his head a lot after awhile."

"Then there was Herd. At the risk of throwing off the chronological order of this book, the stories about Herd can be told in random order because they never made sense anyway. To illustrate his booking genius, one can recount his ideas for wrestler's gimmicks. He actually, on a live TBS special, ordered the debut of his great kid's tag team to get the younger viewers away from WWF--The Ding Dongs."

"He took two local job guys and put them in full body suits and masks, with little bells sewn all over them. They came to the ring accompanied by circus-like music with bells ringing, were announced from "Belleville, Illinois", and when one would get in trouble the other would ring a big ship's bell on the ringpost to rally the fans. The fans rallied, all right, booing and laughing the horseshit out of the arenas as every time they took a bump, their little bells would fly all over the ring."

"One that thankfully never made it in front of fans was his unbeatable tag team, the Hunchbacks. I

sat and watched this mental midget, with a gleam in his eye, actually pitch this lunacy to the committee. The team would be unbeatable because, as Hunchbacks, you couldn't pin both their shoulders at the same time. Ole let him spill this verbal effluvia for about 10 minutes, then said, "Okay, and when the bell rings, I'll slap a submission hold on one, they'll give up, and be beaten in 5 seconds."

"Herd once spearheaded an idea to get the rights to classic movie characters from the Turner movie library for the wrestling company. 'If I could find a 270 pound, 6'5" wrestler with one leg, I'd have Long John Silver!' Herd's eye for talent was impeccable—he would throw huge money at the wrong guy with unerring accuracy. He and I once had an argument over the various merits of Sid Vicious or Arn Anderson. He loved Sid, at least until Sid screwed them over, held them up for money and then bailed to go to WWF. He said, 'Why would I want to feature Arn Anderson over Sid Vicious?' I replied, 'Sid will draw you a million dollars in one night, and then the fans will never want to see it again. Arn will draw you steady money for 5 years, and they'll never get tired of him.'"

"He would make up reasons to yell at you. At one point, Kendall Windham was working prelims for us when he got in legal trouble in Florida, and was unable to leave the state. I got the call, got the talent list and substituted another babyface that wasn't booked. The next meeting, Herd yelled, 'I'm sick of all these card changes!'", then pointed his finger at me and said, "And I'm looking right at you when I say that!" I got hot and yelled back, "The guy's in fuckin' jail, what did you want me to do, bake him a cake with a file in it?"

"I used to daydream in the car during our last year with the company that I would give my notice by kicking in Herd's office door and firing 5 shots from a blank gun at him, until Bobby Eaton said one day, 'Comy, you better not. As many guys as he's pissed off and screwed over, he's probably got a REAL one in his desk drawer!'"

"So it was into this pleasant working environment I ventured to fulfill my lifelong dream of being a booker. Getting back to our chronology, at my first meeting we began to talk about ideas for the MX's heel turn, but two things became quickly apparent. One, Herd thought that all I was going to do was come up with ideas for myself and the MX, even as I sat in front of him with a notepad with ideas for

everybody on the roster, and two, in his own words, "I don't want the Midnight Express working with the 'top' teams!" Seeing that's where we were, I came up with an idea for the MX to do a soap opera angle with and turn on the Dynamic Dudes (Shane Douglas and Johnny Ace--today's WWE Talent Executive John Laurinitis). Herd went for this because he disliked the Dudes almost as much as the MX, and didn't care what we did together because it got both teams out of his way."

"So at the TV tapings in Greenwood on Sept 11, 1989, we started a deal where the Dudes asked me to be their "advisor", beginning an angle where there would be jealousy on the MX's part, as Stan and Ace "hated" each other over an "incident with a woman" years before. Then, at the Clash on Sept. 12 in Columbia, Flair assigned me to do color teaming with Jim Ross. I had done color quite a bit on the TBS weekend shows, and syndication as well, but never a "big event" like a Clash."

"It was the beginning of my favorite announcing position, teaming with the best in the business, JR, who taught me a lot over the years. Flair was beaming after the show, saying we were WCW's answer to Vince McMahon & Jesse Ventura. Ironically, years later, JR and I would team up quite often in the WWF, until we were separated by the WWF's genius executive producer, who thought we were "too Southern". But that's another book."

The Clash ratings were way up from April and June's disasters--with a main event of Flair & Sting vs. Great Muta & Dick Slater, the show did a 4.7 rating, 7.6 share, and was seen in 2,381,000 homes--the main event itself did a 5.8 rating, and it was the third-highest rated of the 8 Clashes so far. Flair was off to a good start as booker.

SEPTEMBER 1989

- 13 OFF
- 14 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes--1 MX win--JC co-host
- 15 Corpus Christi, Tx.

Freebirds over MX	\$28,000(SC)
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- 16 Lubbock, Tx.

Freebirds over MX	\$12,000
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- 17 El Paso, Tx.

Freebirds over MX	
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- 18 Roanoke, Va. TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

Dudes 10.00 draw Freebirds	
Dudes w/JC over N.Z. Militia DARK	
- 19 OFF
- 20 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

1 MX win, 1 Dudes win, JC color	
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21 OFF
 22 Asheville, N.C.
 Lane over Michael Hayes \$41,000
 23 Richmond, Va.--MX plane cancelled
 24 Charlotte, N.C.--show cancelled
 (This was the weekend Hurricane Hugo hit
 Charlotte--most of the city was without power
 and everyone was stranded for 2 days.)
 25 Johnstown, Pa. TV 3 tapes
 1 Dudes win, MX & Doc win 6 man
 26 OFF
 27 Worcester, Mass. Eaton over M. Hayes
 Skyscrapers over Dudes w/JC \$7,100
 28 Troy, N.Y. Lane over M. Hayes
 Skyscrapers over Dudes w/JC
 29 Syracuse, N.Y. Freebirds over MX
 Spivey over Jonny Ace
 (In Troy, the Skyscrapers, who wanted to give the
 Dudes even less of a match than they gave the
 Midnight, broke a bone in Shane Douglas' wrist, and
 he took a few days off before coming back with a cast
 on so as not to break up the continuing TV story with
 the MX.)
 30 Buffalo, N.Y. Freebirds over MX
 Sid over J. Ace \$32,000
 OCTOBER 1989
 1 Rochester, N.Y. Freebirds over MX
 Sid over J. Ace
 2 Salisbury, Md. TV 4 tapes
 (Much of TV was now being done in pieces
 and put together in post--this night, matches were shot
 for the Friday night TBS Power Hour, Sunday TBS
 Main Event, and 2 weeks worth of NWA Pro syndica-
 tion--in the ring, an 8 man with the MX & Dudes vs.
 4 jobbers ended with the MX snatching the win and
 leaving JC & the Dudes in the ring.)
 3 OFF
 4 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 Sat. night WCW tapes
 1 Dudes win, 1 MX & Doc 6 man win,
 Birds attack Dudes & MX make half-hearted save
 5 OFF
 6 Norfolk, Va. Skyscrapers over MX
 Dudes over N.Z. Militia
 7 Pittsburgh, Pa. Skyscrapers over MX
 Dudes over N.Z. Militia
 8 Atlanta, Ga. MX OFF
 Dudes over N.Z. Militia \$79,000
 9 West Palm Beach, Fla. TV 3 tapes
 MX OFF--JC color
 10-13 OFF
 156

14 Baltimore, Md. MX over N.Z. Militia \$50,000
 15 Greensboro, N.C. MX over N.Z. Militia
 16 Greenville, S.C. TV 3 tapes--1 MX win
 17 Marietta, Ga. TBS TV 2 Sat. night WCW shows
 At this TV, after weeks of building jealousy
 between the MX and Dudes, with JC seemingly favor-
 ing the Dudes' side, it was announced that the MX had
 gone behind JC's back and signed a match vs. the
 Dudes for the November Clash. They were enforcing
 a clause in their contract with JC that he HAD to be at
 ringside for the match--arguments between all ensued,
 and JC said he WOULD be ringside, but in a neutral
 corner. At this time, the MX were left off most shows
 except for TV's to add to the angle and their upcoming
 apparent "split" with JC.
 18 Johnson City, Tn. MX over N.Z. Militia
 19-23 OFF
 24 Little Rock, Ark. TV 4 tapes
 MX OFF, JC there as announcer
 25-27 OFF
 28 **PHILADELPHIA, PA. CIVIC CENTER**
 HALLOWEEN HAVOC PPV
 Samoan Swat Team & Samoan Savage
 over MX & Dr. Death
 Freebirds over Dynamic Dudes
 The first Halloween Havoc PPV saw the first-
 ever Thunderdome Cage match, with Flair & Sting vs.
 Terry Funk & Great Muta with manager Gary Hart,
 and the legendary Bruno Sammartino as the special
 referee. It was also one of the first ventures into "spe-
 cial effects" in wrestling, as it was scheduled to be an
 electrified, spooky Halloween cage, but the "electrici-
 ty" set part of the cage on fire, Muta sprayed the mist
 at the flames and Tommy Young risked life and limb
 to slap at the fire with a towel, and the electricity was
 turned off the rest of the way.
 29 OFF
 30 Gainesville, Ga. TV 2 tapes
 Eddie Gilbert & T. Rich over MX DQ
 At this taping, JC accidentally caused the MX
 to get disqualified while trying to stop the Dudes from
 interfering, adding to the "problems" between JC and
 the MX--as well, more of the nearly 2 month long
 build was recapped. Also at this TV, Herd decided to
 use his "real" TV experience to rewrite the TV for-
 mats in a more "professional" way to show the book-
 ing committee how it was done, but this only lasted
 one taping when none of the cast or crew could read
 the freakin' things.)
 31 OFF

WED. NOV. 15 TROY, N.Y. CLASH OF CHAMPIONS #9

HOT OPEN: 15 WARRIORS 15 LUGER
 1:30 PM 1:30 PM 1:30 PM

NWA
 1-900-909-4900

TO SET - ROSS + - TONIGHT'S LINEUP
 TERRY FUNK IN FOR LIVE P.A. INTERVIEW 1:30

DONT MISS!

ROAD (2m) 1 FALL 30 min (1m)
 WARRIORS (2m) VS FABULOUS
 (2m) FREEBROS

FUTURE SHOCK!
 NIGHT OF THE ICEMAN
 US 1:30 PM

(1m) 1 FALL 20 min (1m ring)
 THE 2-MAN VS SUPER DESTROYER

FROM THE OMNI-STAR!

COVER PITCH: THE LOUISVILLE SLUGGER V CORNELL
 SPECIAL GUESTS - RICK + SCOTT STEINER
 LIVE ON P.A. 3:00

THIS SAT NITE ON
 WLW HERE ON TBS -
 FREEBROS VS STEINERS
 FOR THE LIBERTY TAG TEAM!

COVER PITCH TO VTR INT 1:30 WOMAN + DOOM
 T. KINS: (2m) 1 FALL 30 min (1m)
 DOOM W/ WOMAN VS TOMMY RICH + ERIC GLOST

PLUS!
 SUNDAY ON THE MAIN EVENT
 STING + ELVIN BLAN TEAM!

(2m) 1 FALL 30 min (1m)
 THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS VS DYNAMIC DUES
 (CORNELL TO UNOSIDE IN NEUTRAL CORNER)

PLUS!
 FROM NIGHT ON THE
 POWER HOUR -
 RETURN US TIME -
 LUGER VS MULLER

MOST POPULAR WRESTLER - WRESTLER OF THE YEAR
 ALWAYS CELEBRATION TO RICH + STING

TO SET: ANNOUNCERS - OVERVIEW OF ST. LOUIS 1:30
 TO KINS: (2m) 1 FALL 30 min (1m)
 RICK + SCOTT STEINER VS SCOTT STEINER

NWA COMING TO!
 NEW ORLEANS
 ST. LOUIS SAT 18TH
 PITTSBURGH SUN 19TH
 COLUMBUS, OHIO MON 20TH
 (RICH + SCOTT STEINER)
 IN COLUMBUS ALSO

TO SET: LIVE PA INTERVIEW WARRIORS + STEINERS 2:00
 ABOUT PREVIOUS EVENT AND T. KINS

COVER PITCH: VTR INT 1:30
 TO KINS: (2m) 1 FALL 30 min (1m)
 1:30 PM 1:30 PM 1:30 PM

WIKSGIVING WEEK
 SPECTACULARS!
 RALEIGH, N.C. TUE 21ST
 CHARLOTTE, NC WED 22ND
 THE OMNI THURS 23RD
 ROME, VA FRI 24TH

COVER PITCH: VTR INT 1:30
 TO MUSIC + ANNOUNCERS 1:30 PM
 (1:30 PM 1:30 PM 1:30 PM)

MUSIC 2:00 PM 2:00 PM 2:00 PM
 1:30 PM 1:30 PM 1:30 PM

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING
1984

SHOW #
DEC
DATE OF AIR

END (Today is not a contest!)

SEGMENT #1 SET-ROSS 1:00 TOMMY FLAIR VS MUTA - WE'LL SEE LAST WK'S
WRESTLE TITLE WIN BY STEINER SOTHERS
FULL LINEUP INFO ON STALLCADE - THE IRONMAN

TORING (FLY IN 30 KAHWA ABOUT LOSS, RICH + GILBERT)

TEST +
SAMOHN SAVAGE VS

BREAK #1 2:00 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #2 ROAD WARRIORS VS + (RETURN MARK IS
SIGNED W/STEINER)

WOMEN PITCH TO 1:30 T. LONG (ABOUT WARRIORS + STALLCADE)

TOMMY RICH
EDDIE GILBERT VS (TALK ABOUT UPCOMING
BOUT W/3 SAMOHN)

1:00 PIC

BREAK #2 2:00 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #3 STALLCADE VTR SEGMENT (ACTION HIGHLIGHTS LYNCH W/STEINER)
THU. LOSS W/STAY FOR LINEUP

FLY IN 30 WOMAN - ABOUT STALLCADE + TITLE W/STEINER

CHRYSLER COLLEGE SCOREBOARD

BREAK #3 2:00 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #4 PITCH TO UNTIL LAST WK STEINER'S WIN BELTS 2:00

TORING: RICK + SCOT VS (NEW CHAMP - HOW WILL
THEY DO AGAINST THE
ROAD WARRIORS AT
STALLCADE?)

LIVE INT STEINER'S 1:00 (ABOUT STALLCADE + DOOM)

1:00 PIC

BREAK #4 2:00 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #5

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS VS (DOES WANT
REVENGE IN UP-
COMING MATCH)

SET - LIVE INT CORNETTE + MIDNIGHT 1:30

(WHAT BETTER COMPETITION - ABOUT DUKES - CHALLENGE FLAIR FOR NWA'S
NWA WWW EVENT W/1984)

1:00 PIC

BREAK #5 2:10 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #6 1/2

STING VS (PROBLEMS W/LOSER -
MUST WRESTLE FLAIR AT
STALLCADE)

OUT OF STALLCADE PITCH TO VTR INT LUGER 1:00 "I KNOW YOUR NAME"

(BUT LUGER HIT BLIND PUNCH/STING AT CASH/
PRELIM T. LUGER'S/SUCKER PUNCHING STING FROM
VTR ABOUT)

NEXT PPV SPECIAL
STALLCADE '89 -
FUTURE SHOCK

THE IRONMAN -
WED DEC 13

CALL YOUR CABLE

THE NWA THIS WEEK -

TONITE -
BALTIMORE
38 STARS OF THE NWA

TOMORROW -
NEW HAVEN, CT

FAMILY DAY -
KIDS 12 + UNDER 5.00
WITH PAID ADULT ADMISSION

MONDAY -
PENSACOLA, FLA.
FLAIR, STING + LUGER

ALBANY, GA
STEINER, DUKES, BLAN

WEDNESDAY -
WALTER, LUGER, WARRIORS
STING, LUGER, WARRIORS

THURSDAY -
MERIDIAN, MS
STING, LUGER, WARRIORS
COLUMBUS, GA
STEINER, DUKES, BLAN

FRIDAY -
MEMPHIS, TENN
STING, LUGER, WARRIORS
STING, LUGER, WARRIORS

NEXT SAT DEC 1
NASHVILLE, TENN
STING, LUGER, WARRIORS
STING, LUGER, WARRIORS

US TITLE
FLY IN STING

WHAT IS THE NIGHT

EXCEL HOUR

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING
2nd Hour

SHOW #: 11/16
REG: 11/16
DATE OF AIR: 11/25/89

SEGMENT #1 "MAD DOG"

BUZZ SAWYER VS _____

(HART'S NEWEST
MAD DOG CHALLENGER
INDIVIDUAL)

SET-LIVE WTC HART, BUZZ 1:30 (TODAY MUTA VS FLAIR -
PUT BUZZ + DYNAMITE OVER
MUTA IN STALLADE)

BREAK #1 2:00 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #2 (FLY IN: 30 FREEBROS - "MUST GO THROUGH 2 + FS FOR TALE SKIT")

FLY IN BRIAN VS _____
Z-MAN VS _____

(TRYING TO TURN BACK
FORMER TT CHAMPIONS
FREEBROS IN A
COMING MATCH)

SET-LIVE WTC FLAIR 2:00 (TODAY VS MUTA - HOP ON LUGER'S ACTIONS AT
CLASH - STALLADE - WILL WRESTLE EATON NXWOMEN)

1:00 DIC

BREAK #2 3:00 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #3 (FLY IN: 30 DUDES ABOUT MIDNIGHT + JC)

DYNAMIC
DUDES VS _____

ATC-SLOW PITCH TO UTR NWA MAWMENT 1/19 STING + BRIAN VS MILITIA 1:00
(LITTLE BROOK ROLLS INTO RING)

CHRYSLER COLLEGE SCOREBOARD

BREAK #3 2:00 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #4 SPECIAL CHALLENGE EVENT!

RIC FLAIR VS THE GREAT MUTA
RING ENTRANCES THEN TO BREAK —

1:00 DIC

BREAK #4 3:00 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #5

MATCH CONTINUES

1:00 DIC

BREAK #5 2:10 FOR STATION

SEGMENT #6

MATCH CONTINUES AND CONCLUDES!

Report
First
Page

PLUS:

DOIST FOREST!

NWA RETURNS TO
BUFFALO, NY

THURSDAY, DEC. 7

AND

DETROIT, MICH

CORO ARENA

SAT, DEC 16

30 STARS —

BIGGEST CARS EVER
AT THE CORO!

JC's first draft of the
WCW Saturday Night
show to air 11-25-89
The blanks were filled
in with "Enhancement
Talent", aka job guys,
on the day of taping

NOVEMBER 1989

1 ATLANTA TBS 2 tapes--1 MX win
2-5 OFF

6 Savannah, Ga. TV 4 tapes

MX & JC on taped promos for after Clash
7-14 OFF

15 TROY, N.Y. RPI FIELDHOUSE

TBS CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 9

Midnight Express over Dynamic Dudes

"For two months", JC recalls, "These two babyface teams and the babyface manager, who seldom even won a match and had been booked in prelims most of the time, took the few minutes per TV show they were allowed and went out and crafted a believable personal conflict that left the fans doubting where it was headed. Herd didn't care what we did as long as we stayed out of the main eventers' way, and Ric and Kevin knew what I was doing and liked it, so it was the only angle over that two month period in WCW that hadn't been changed, watered down or outright axed. Even Flair's program with Funk, which was resulting in classic matches in the ring, rising ratings and a resurgence of house show gates, was a struggle for Flair to maintain against Herd's interference."

"The time came for the MX-Dudes showdown, with me in a neutral corner and clearly "not happy" with the MX, and it resulted in one of the most memorable, if not profitable, moments in the MX's history, but not quite in the way I had imagined. I had wanted it to be the MX's heel turn, where we could get back into the ring with babyface teams like the Steiners and the soon-to-return Rock & Roll Express, and at least be able to have our customary barnburner matches as heels instead of floundering against all the big and/or immobile heel teams in WCW at that time."

"I knew that the Dudes were shaping up to be a pretty spectacular flop as faces, as even though Shane Douglas was an excellent worker, their gimmick of riding skateboards, wearing fluorescent spandex tights, and Johnny Ace's awkward, two-left-feet style of work had doomed them to be mostly ridiculed by the fans. But it was what we had to work with, and we'd made tougher stuff work in the past."

"The match was good and was going perfectly when a 4 way broke out, and the referee was distracted. Bobby pulled out a chain and swung at Shane, but he ducked and backdropped Bobby, the chain falling in the middle. I rolled in from my ringside seat, where I had remained, un-Cornette like, throughout the

match. I grabbed the chain, threw it out of the ring, cursed at Bobby, and told Shane "Get him!" As Shane walked past me to grab Bobby, I unloaded a Howitzer shot with the racket on the back of Shane's head, knocking him cold for Bobby to pin, and jumped out of the ring. But I couldn't believe what I heard. The crowd erupted in one of the biggest babyface pops I'd heard in years at this act of total treachery."

"They cheered, and kept cheering, and after the three count cheered louder. It was almost as if they were saying, "FINALLY! The Midnight Express and Jim Cornette that we've wanted to see for almost a year are back!" The fans, bless'em, knew we'd been getting screwed for the past year and thought that this was the signal that we were returning to our old ways, our old spot, and they would be seeing some great tag team wrestling again."

"They were partially right--we wouldn't be getting our old spot back, but this match kicked off our final year in WCW, where when given an opening we would have the best tag team matches in the business every time out. To this day, when I see fans at fan-fests, this moment remains one of the most memorable to them of our careers, because of the build, the viewership, and the execution, despite the fact that it was never placed in a position to draw a single dime."

Business-wise, the Clash was a raging success, with the 2nd-best Clash rating ever, a 4.9 rating, 7.8 share and seen in 2,507,000 homes. The main event, the legendary Flair-Funk "I Quit" match, in the last 15 minutes posted a whopping 6.3 rating and was seen in over 4 million homes, or by the method of tabulation in those days, about 6 million people, the best since Flair-Sting in 1988.

Incredibly, it would only be about 6 months before Herd went on the "Flair's too old" campaign, trying to replace and retire him in 1990, even though the Nature Boy was the franchise of the company and held a spot in the top match on every single one of TBS' 10 highest rated wrestling programs, and highest grossing live events.

Flair would eventually retire--in 2008, 18 years later, in the WWE, in the most emotional match in Wrestlemania history, when Jim Herd was but a faint bitter smell to most of the wrestling industry. The following weekend, headlined by an NWA World Tag Title match with new champs Rick & Scott Steiner defending against the Freebirds, WCW Saturday night would break a 3 rating for the first time in a year, and stay there for several months.

16 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 Sat. WCW shows

1 MX COR loss

Dynamic Dudes over MX DQ

These tapings, which would air 11/25 and 12/2, saw in the first show JC rip off the old Ernie Ladd deal where the MX, in street clothes, would refuse to wrestle two jobbers, forfeit the match, and then beat the crap out of them. The 12/2 show, with the Dudes' TV rematch with the MX as the main event, did a 3.6 rating seen in 1,900,000 homes, the best Saturday night rating in well over a year and almost an equal rating to the June Clash.

17 New Orleans, La.

MX over Dynamic Dudes \$15,000

18 St. Louis, Mo.

MX over Dynamic Dudes

19 Pittsburgh, Pa.

MX over Dynamic Dudes \$25,000

20 Columbus, Ohio TV 4 tapes--1 MX win

Ric Flair over Bobby Eaton DQ NWA WHC

After 14 years as a pro, Bobby Eaton got his first NWA World Heavyweight Title match on a TBS Main Event telecast--Flair had never worked a single match against Eaton, and specifically wanted to do so on TV, so the match was booked. Not feeling he should beat Bobby right after the MX's heel turn, he did a DQ finish after a great 20:00 match with JC interfering. Herd went ballistic that the World Champion "couldn't even beat Bobby Eaton". The match, when it aired on 12/3/89, did a 3.3 rating, a 5.6 share and was seen in 1,732,000 homes, the best Sunday TBS rating in over a year.

21 Raleigh, N.C.

MX over Dynamic Dudes \$20,000

22 Charlotte, N.C.

MX over Dynamic Dudes \$15,000

With TV ratings on the rise and the angles clicking, WCW again shows it's complete lack of understanding of it's markets and resentment of the Carolinas fan base by running the 25,000 seat New Charlotte Coliseum on a Wednesday night, Thanksgiving Eve, and drawing barely 1,500 paying \$15,000 for Flair vs. Muta NWA Title, Sting vs. Lex Luger U.S. Title, Road Warriors vs. Skyscrapers, Doom vs. Steiners, Brian Pillman & Z-Man vs. Freebirds, MX vs. Dudes plus 3 more matches.

This PPV quality card died, as did many other WCW house shows, because of booking either the wrong arena, the right arena on the wrong night, the wrong city, or just flat out having incompetant local

promoters in charge of the events

It was becoming blindingly obvious that house show business under WCW was going nowhere no matter what the lineup or who the booker was

23 Atlanta, Ga. MX over Dynamic Dudes \$72,000

(The Thanksgiving night Starcade tradition was long gone, and the biggest-drawing night of the year was reduced to an Omni house show with about 7,000 fans.)

24 Roanoke, Va. MX over Dynamic Dudes

25 Philadelphia, Pa. 2PM

MX over Dynamic Dudes \$18,000

Baltimore, Md. 8PM

MX over Dynamic Dudes \$32,000

(The same Charlotte lineup draws all-time, embarrassing lows in two of the biggest markets in the country--these fans were pissed at the PROMOTION.)

26 New Haven, Ct.

MX over Dynamic Dudes \$15,000

27 Pensacola, Fla. TV 4 tapes--2 MX wins

28 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes

On the first taping, the MX issued a "triple challenge"--they would beat 3 teams in a row. They beat 2, then the third, "Bruce Wayne & Dick Grayson", revealed themselves as the Dudes and got a quick win over the MX. The MX had a quick win on the 2nd tape. But big things were happening at this taping and behind the scenes.

Flair had brokered a deal for Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson to return from the WWF and hopefully put WCW over the top by reuniting the Horsemen. After giving notice to WWF, Tully really didn't care what he did, and flunked his last WWF drug test. When Herd found out, he rescinded the \$250,000 per year deal he had made, refusing to bring Tully in at all, and since Arn "wasn't as valuable" without Tully, reduced his offer to \$150,000.

Arn took it as he had no other choice, Tully's major-league wrestling career came to an end while only in his mid-30's, and it became impossible for WCW to hire top talent away from WWF for the next 5 years as it got out their word was no good.

Flair, Sullivan and JC were livid at this, but Herd wouldn't budge, and Arn debuted at this taping with Ole Anderson coming out of retirement to take Tully's spot. On the plus side, a young man debuted on this taping that would become a special project of Sullivan & JC's--Cactus Jack Manson (Mick Foley).

29 Warner-Robins, Ga.

Dynamic Dudes over MX \$10,000

30 Meridian, Miss.

Dynamic Dudes over MX \$12,000

DECEMBER 1989

1 Memphis, Tn. MX over Dynamic Dudes \$15,000

2 Nashville, Tn. MX over Dynamic Dudes \$16,000

3 Bristol, Tn. TV 3 tapes--3 MX wins \$15,000

4 Beckley, W.Va. Dynamic Dudes over MX \$7,000

5 Dayton, Ohio TV 4 tapes

MX OFF--JC there for promos

6 OFF (JC had to travel to Chicago for a booking meeting where nothing was done, then on to Buffalo, N.Y.)

7 Buffalo, N.Y. MX over Dynamic Dudes

8 Norfolk, Va. MX & JC missed show with several other WCW wrestlers as their flight landed in Baltimore, then their connection was snowed in and cancelled.

9 Washington, D.C. MX over Dynamic Dudes

10 Greensboro, N.C. TBS TV

2 Sat. night WCW shows

More drama occurred at this taping--on the first show, a setup was done where after the MX defeated the returning Fantastics, the Dudes fooled JC into signing a contract for a "match next week on TV", which was revealed to be not a tag match with the MX, but a single match with JC vs. Shane Douglas with no DQ. It was designed both to show the Dudes outsmarting the MX, and as a ratings ploy for the fans to want to see JC mutilated.

On the 2nd taping, when the bout got in the ring, JC threw powder in Shane's eyes and beat on him for two minutes or so until Shane cleared his eyes, made a comeback, and pinned JC while choking him a la the Ronnie Garvin cage match in 1987. The MX hit the ring and attacked Shane until Ace came in and saved him, and the program was freshened up.

Shane pouted for 2 days, then called Herd and, taking himself way too seriously, complained that he had to sell for a manager. Herd, as usual oblivious to most wrestling protocol, backed him up, and ordered a reshoot of the match in Peoria on 12/14/89. In THIS one, JC came to the ring "injured" with a doctor's note, substituted Eaton in the match with Shane, and in the finish Shane jerked JC into the ring and pinned him. Thus, Shane and Herd basically false advertised a TV match, killed the promotion for upcoming MX-Dudes tag matches where the Dudes would get 5:00 with JC if they won, got heat on the Dudes with the booking committee, and since JC was the only one in

the office trying to do ANYTHING with the Dudes and now he was pissed, the Dudes were screwed. JC washed his hands of them, the finishes in the upcoming tag matches were changed to MX going over so the 5:00 stipulation never came into play, and the Dudes were history shortly into 1990.

Incidentally, the 12/30/89 edition of WCW, with the JC-Shane match and a Sting vs. Dragonmaster main event as the only advertised matches, did a 3.4 rating, 6.5 share in 1,759,000 homes, the 2nd highest Saturday night rating in over a year, behind only the MX-Dudes rematch on 12/2/89. Funny how these things happen.

11 Raleigh, N.C. TV 3 tapes 2 MX wins

At this taping, one of the MX matches was against the Galaxians (Danny Davis and Ken Wayne), one of the first teams JC had managed back in his rookie year in Memphis. WCW needed quality workers on TV and house shows, and JC had talked Herd into bringing them in for TV tryouts, but management was blind to their talent and deemed them "too small". It was a thrill, however, for JC personally to have the MX work against the team that first taught him how to manage a tag team properly.

12 OFF

13 ATLANTA, GA. THE OMNI

STARCADE 1989 NIGHT OF THE IRONMAN

Once again, Starcade on Pay Per View was a Wednesday night, this time two weeks before Christmas, with a round-robin tournament format where 4 teams and 4 singles would all wrestle each other, with the winner of the most matches becoming the "Ironman" or "Iron Team".

Herd wouldn't hear of the MX being considered one of the top 4 teams in WCW, even though it would have upped match quality considerably and eased the burden on the booking committee of figuring out finishes, so the four teams were the Steiners, the Road Warriors, the SST, and Doom (Butch Reed and Ron Simmons). The four singles were Ric Flair, Lex Luger, Sting and the Great Muta. JC and Jim Ross provided the commentary for the tag matches, while JR and Terry Funk called the singles matches. The PPV, business-wise, did about a 2 buy rate of available PPV homes at the time, with about \$5 million in revenue coming WCW's way.

14 Peoria, Illinois TV 4 tapes 1 MX win

Ric Flair over Bobby Eaton NWAWHC

Ever since the first Flair-Eaton World Title match, Herd hadn't let up on how Flair hadn't won cleanly. So

Flair insisted on booking a return, where they had another great match ending in a finish JC devised, where Flair survived a Lane run-in, threw Stan out of the ring, knocked JC out with his own racket, and pinned Bobby clean in the middle of the ring.

"Let the bastard bitch about THAT" was JC's remark as Flair stood triumphant over all 3 members of the MX. Herd STILL wasn't happy about it, even when the ratings came in and the show did a 3.2 rating, 5.0 share in 1,667,000 homes on 1/7/90, the highest rated Sunday Main Event on TBS since, you guessed it, the first Flair-Eaton match on 12/3/89.

15 St. Louis, Mo. MX over Dynamic Dudes
16 Detroit, Mich. MX over Dynamic Dudes
17-24 OFF

25 Greenville, S.C. 2PM
MX over Dynamic Dudes \$17,000
Charlotte, N.C. 8PM
MX over Dynamic Dudes \$34,000

26 Knoxville, Tn. MX over Dynamic Dudes
27 Philadelphia, Pa. MX over Dynamic Dudes
(A famous night in WCW--the Philly fans, cynical, smart and wildly pro-Express, brought a banner in the stands, 10 feet long and six feet tall, that said "Johnny Ace sucks Shane's dick". The 3000 or so fans in attendance repeatedly chanted "Johnny sucks dick" as the MX got heat on him, and erupted in cheers when the MX won the match.)

28 Baltimore, Md.
MX over Dynamic Dudes \$47,000
29 Richmond, Va.
MX over Dynamic Dudes
30 Greensboro, N.C.
Shane Douglas over Lane \$35,000
31 OFF

JANUARY 1990

1 Atlanta, Ga. MX over Dynamic Dudes \$50,000
2 Gainesville, Ga. TV 4 tapes
3 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes 2 MX wins
4 Roanoke, Va. MX over Dynamic Dudes
5 Raleigh, N.C. MX over Dynamic Dudes
6 Charlottesville, Va.
Dynamic Dudes over MX/over JC

After the Dudes' whining to the office about the match with JC, the finishes had been changed to the MX going over in all the matches where 500 was at stake, making them the first babyfaces in wrestling history that did not win this stipulation. It was felt this was shortchanging the fans, so with this

night, the MX agreed to put the Dudes over, and JC would be jerked in, bodyslammed and pinned in seconds. The Dudes were still cheered in the Southern markets where face-heel was more clearly delineated but in the Northeast the crowds were overwhelmingly pro-MX, making the babyface-heel dynamic in the matches awkward to say the least

7-8 OFF

9 Saginaw, Mich. TV 4 tapes
MX & Freebirds over R&R & Dudes \$22,500
10 OFF--JC to booking meeting at Detroit airport--nothing accomplished

11-14 OFF

15 Johnson City, Tn. TV 4 tapes--1 MX win
MX over Dynamic Dudes DARK

16 ATLANTA TBS TV--TAPING CANCELLED

The wrestlers, office and TV crew showed up to Centre Stage in Atlanta for the TBS TV taping of two week's worth of Saturday night WCW shows, to find that WCW had booked Centre Stage for a taping in the middle of extensive renovations--i.e., there were no seats in the building.

After discussions of whether the fans could sit on the bare concrete ledges covered in construction dust, the decision was made to instead piss off the people in Huntsville, Al. the next night by making them sit through the taping of two 2 hour TV shows instead of the house show matches they had paid to see

17 Huntsville, Al. TBS TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
18 Camp LeJeune, N.C.

Dynamic Dudes over MX/over JC
19 Norfolk, Va. Dynamic Dudes over MX over JC
20 Baltimore, Md.

Rock & Roll Express over MX \$62,000



After a year of mostly so-so matches with mostly so-so opponents, the MX settled into their 1990 spot on this night--back as heels, still being booked mostly middle of the card, but with a string of babyface opponents who wanted to work.

The MX began a year of having the second-best match on the card, behind Flair vs. whoever, and there was no better way to start than their old rivals, the Rock & Roll Express, Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson, who had just returned to WCW, were anxious to get over again on a national basis, and who the fans welcomed back as if they had never left.

21 Richmond, Va. Rock & Roll over MX	
22 Raleigh, N.C.	
Dudes over MX/over JC	\$12,000
23 Greenville, S.C. TV 4 tapes	
Arm Anderson over Eaton TV Title	
Dudes over MX DARK	
24 Myrtle Beach, S.C.	
Dudes over MX/over JC	\$15,000
25 Columbia, S.C.	
Dudes over MX/over JC	
26 Atlanta, Ga. Rock & Roll over MX	\$60,000
27 Charleston, S.C.	
Dudes over MX/over JC	\$35,000

To: Jim Herd

From: Ric Flair

Date: February 22, 1990

Subject: Chairman of Booking Committee responsibilities

I have tried very hard to make the committee work and have spent many long hours analyzing the internal turmoil and the reasons for the turmoil.

I have come to the conclusion that your interference is the planning of the committee and constant changes exercised by members of the committee without my approval is not workable.

You had promised me full control and you have not kept that promise.

Please accept my resignation from the committee effective immediately and rest assured that I will conduct myself in the same high standard that I have throughout my career.

cc: J. Petrik
Booking Committee

28 Off
29 Savannah, Ga. Dudes over MX/over JC
30 Marietta, Ga. TV 4 tapes
MX over Rock & Roll USTIC Tournament
(The tournament to determine the new United States Tag Team Champions started on this syndicated TV taping with a first-round victory for the MX.)
31 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
(JC continued doing color on most Saturday night TBS shows with JR)

FEBRUARY 1990

1 Memphis, Tn. Rock & Roll over MX	\$24,000
2 Springfield, Mo. Rock & Roll over MX	\$30,400
3 Oklahoma City, Ok. Rock & Roll over MX	
4 Dallas, Tx. Rock & Roll over MX	
5 OFF--JC to Corpus Christi for booking meeting	

6 CORPUS CHRISTI, TX.

TBS CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 10

Once again, the MX were left off a live TBS special, but lots went on, mostly behind the scenes-- Jim Barnett, still living in the 70's, thought that the only way to draw in a town in Texas near the Mexican border was to feature Mexican legend Mil Mascaras,

Flair's letter of resignation as booker was a model of understatement

then past 50 and who refused to lose under any circumstances. He was booked against Cactus Jack, who, in a story recounted in Mick's best selling book "Have a Nice Day", was at a loss of how to make the match palatable. JC suggested he take a bump JC had seen him take in Memphis before losing. At the appropriate time, Mascaras dropkicked Mick off the apron, and Mick took a flat-back bump over the mats and onto the concrete floor, whereupon JC, doing the color with Jim Ross, exclaimed "Cactus Jack is dead!"

Mick crawled back into the ring, was pinned by Mascaras, and was over more than ever before as he had taken the first death-defying, memorable bump of his WCW career. Later, in the cage match main event with Flair, Ole & Arn vs. Muta, Buzz Sawyer and Dragonmaster, Sting, who the Horsemen had turned on earlier in the show, tried to climb the cage for the climactic finish building to his PPV match against Flair in Greensboro on February 25. When security pulled him down, he suffered a serious injury as he tore a knee ligament, and was sidelined for months.

Emergency plans were put in place right after the show to turn Lex Luger babyface and put him in the challenger spot, leading to the first big money program for Luger since the summer of 1988, where the Flair-Luger matches nearly convinced Jim Crockett not to sell, and delaying the Sting NWA Title win until the Summer.

Considerable rewriting was done by Flair, Sullivan and JC overnight before the next day's TV. The Corpus Christi event drew a sellout 3,000 paying \$30,000. Clash ratings were strong, with the show doing an overall 4.5 rating, 6.7 share in 2,425,000 homes, with the main event peaking at a 5.9 rating, nearly 4 million homes.

7 Beaumont, Tx. TV 3 tapes

Brian Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC Tourney

The Beaumont taping drew about 3500 paying \$36,000 and lots went on. Pillman and Tom Zenk (Z-Man) defeated the MX in a second-round match in the USTTC tournament.

Luger began his babyface turn to take Sting's place on the Feb. 25 PPV, and the Sunday TBS Main Event was taped with Ric Flair & Arn Anderson vs. the Rock & Roll Express to air 2/18/90, more on that later.

8 Belton, Tx. Rock & Roll over MX \$20,000

9 San Antonio, Tx. Rock & Roll over MX \$20,000

10 OFF

11 Knoxville, Tn. Rock & Roll over MX \$37,000

This show, seeing the enthusiastic and larger-than-normal crowd of 4000 fans, is what caused JC to see Knoxville as a better-than-average wrestling market and was the inspiration for his idea of Smoky Mountain Wrestling, which would debut in Knoxville in 1992, after he had left WCW.

12 Rainsville, Al. TV 4 tapes--1 MX win

At this taping, Pillman and Zenk beat the Freebirds for the USTTC.

13 Gainesville, Ga. TBS TV 2 WCW shows

(At this TV, the 2/17/90 WCW Saturday night show was taped with a main event of Ric Flair vs. Brian Pillman, more on that in a moment)

14-16 OFF

17 Jackson, Tn. R&R over MX \$14,000

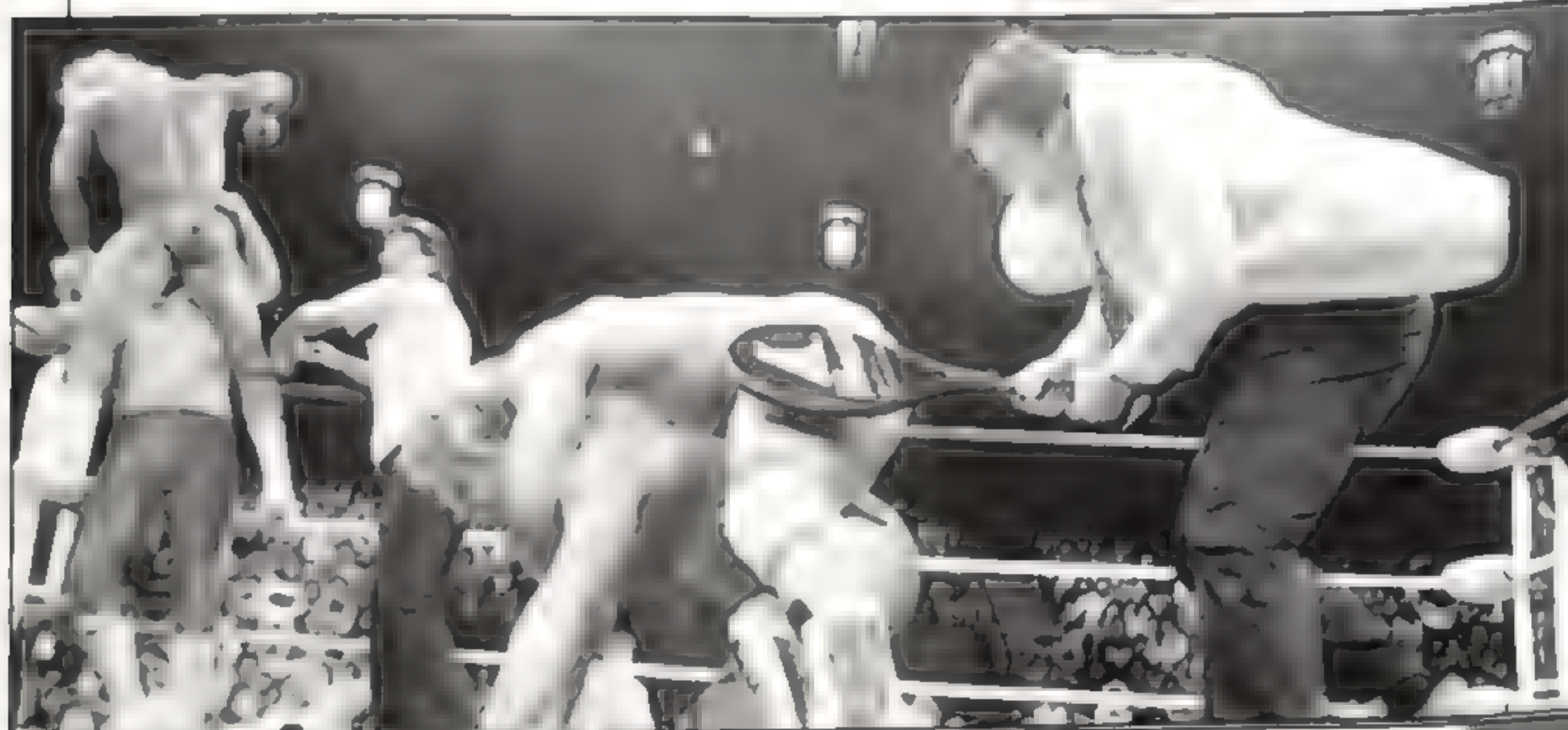
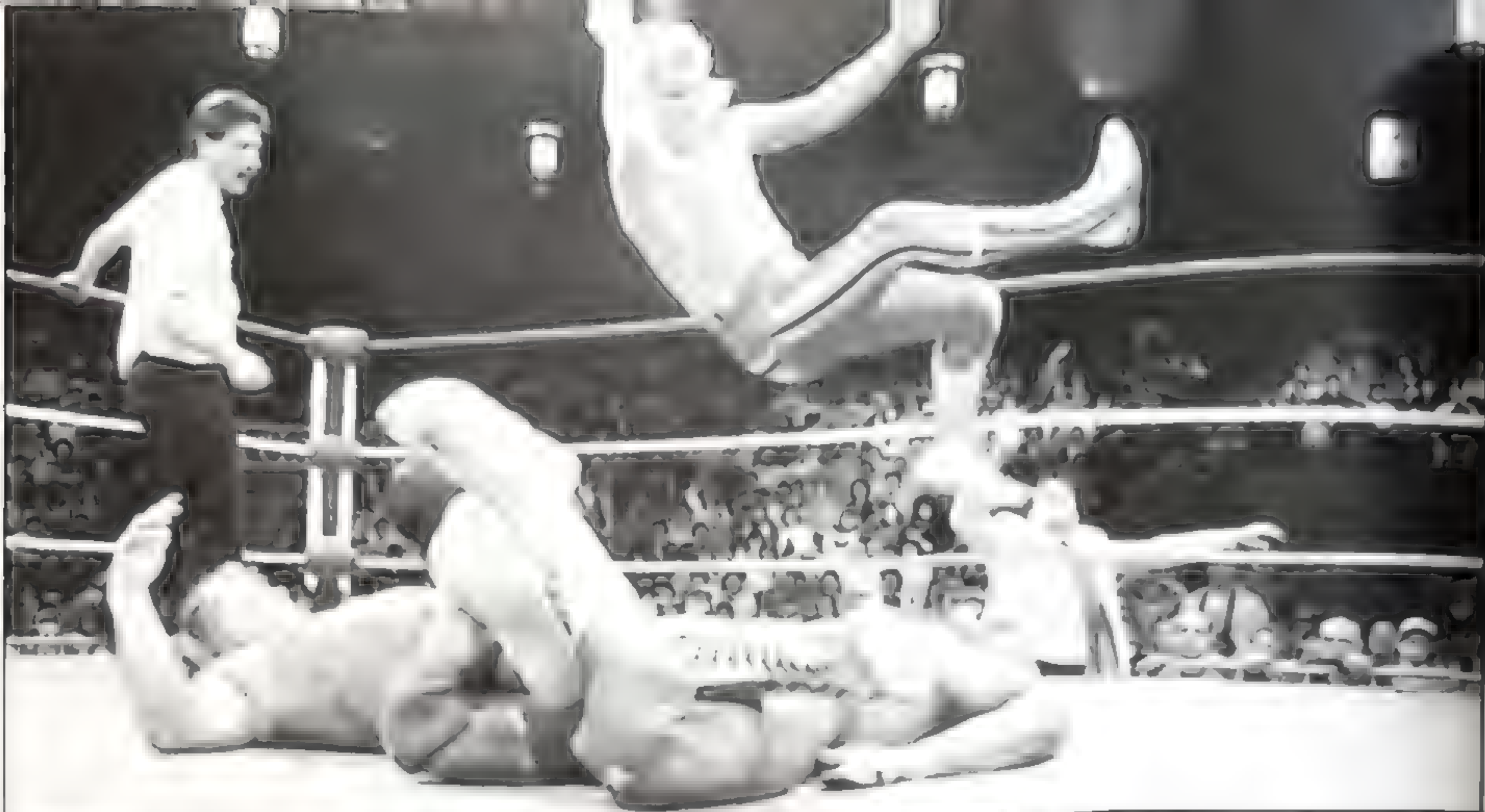
18 Murfreesboro, Tn. R&R over MX \$19,000

The ratings came in for the weekend--the Saturday night WCW show on 2/17/90, with the main event of Ric Flair vs. Brian Pillman, which Flair had specifically booked as he saw Pillman as a rising star, did a 4.0 rating, a 7.8 share, in 2,130,000 homes, the best rating since February 1987 and an all-time high in viewers due to TBS's increasing availability in cable homes.

The 2/18/90 Sunday TBS Main Event, with Flair & Arn vs. Rock & Roll Express, booked specifically by Flair because of the quality of the match and what he knew was the residual drawing power of the Horsemen vs. Rock & Roll from the boom period of 1986, did a 4.4 rating, 8.2 share in 2,324,000 homes, or about 5 million viewers, the best TBS number since December 1985 and all-time high for the Sunday program.

Regardless of any bullshit spouted by Jim Herd, Ric Flair as booker, with Flair, Kevin Sullivan and Jim Cornette writing the TV's and PPV's from September 1989 to February 1990, had, according to the stone cold facts of the Nielsen numbers, taken the ratings from the toilet that George Scott put them in.

After the all time low of June 1989 where WCW Saturday night did a 1.9 on 6/10/89, Main Event did a 1.1 on 6/11, and the Clash of Champions did it's lowest rating ever, 3.8 on 6/14/89, the TBS shows were at record levels only 8 months later. Still, Herd refused to put his personal feelings aside and stay the fuck out of their way. Ric Flair resigned as booker on 2/22/90, citing Herd's constant interference and unkept promise of control, and WCW would not match these ratings again until 1996.



*The phantom angle in
Altoona.
The drop toe hold elbow
on Pillman (top)
JC's racket on Zenk
causes the DQ (middle)
The Veg-O-Matic on the
racket to Pillman's throat
"injures" his vocal chords
(bottom)*



Meanwhile, for the Express and JC, more ill will with the WCW office occurred on the record ratings weekend when they received their termination notices. According to the contracts they and most other WCW talent signed, the contracts would automatically renew for one year periods at the same terms unless a termination notice was received more than 90 days prior to the end of the contract. This did not mean that a talent was necessarily fired, but that they would have to renegotiate new deals from scratch.

For those like the aforementioned Iron Sheik, who would be far from the only individual this would happen with in the early '90's WCW, this clause worked to their benefit. They were hired, found for some reason unwanted or incapable of performing up to a certain standard, and sent home, where they would be forgotten about, their rollover dates missed, and renew for a second year of being paid to sit at home.

Meanwhile, with the Express working a full TV and road schedule and having the best tag team matches on nearly every card, and JC doing triple duty as manager, announcer and booking committee member, their notices arrived registered mail and on time. JC would soon have the pleasure of more contract talks with Jim Herd.

February 1990

19 OFF
20 Ozark, Al. TV 3 tapes--2 MX wins
R&R over MX DARK \$30,000
21 Birmingham, Al. R&R over MX \$9,100
22 ATLANTA TBS TV 2 tapes--1 MX win
23 Asheville, N.C. R&R over MX \$35,000
24 OFF

25 GREENSBORO, N.C. THE COLISEUM

WRESTLEWAR '90 LIVE ON PPV

Rock & Roll Express over MX \$86,000

Booked in an undercard match in the arena of one of their greatest triumphs, both teams, the R&R feeling unappreciated as well, went out and had possibly their best broadcast match ever, a fast-paced, 4 star 20.00 affair that was clearly the show-stealer and consensus opinion best match on the card except for the Ric Flair vs. Lex Luger main event.

Flair, having just resigned from the booking committee and wrestling on his birthday in his favorite arena, had something to prove as well, and made Luger look so good that Herd accelerated plans to phase Flair out and make Luger and Sting the top

stars of the company.

WCW was hitting upon an unorthodox motivational technique--make the talent so mad at the company they went out and performed at their best just to get all their frustrations out. Business-wise, the show only did \$86,000 at the gate, but did an approximate 2.0 buy rate in 240,000 homes out of the available 12 million homes in the PPV universe at the time, a high mark for WCW on PPV.)

26 Beckley, W.Va. TV 4 tapes--1 MX win

27 OFF

28 Altoona, Pa. TBS TV 2 tapes

Pillman & Z-Man over MX DQ USTTC

R&R over MX DARK

The Phantom Angle

With Flair out as booker, Herd turned his attention to putting the screws to the MX & JC. Once again, a committee format was instituted, with JC, Jim Ross, Barnett, Herd, Hamilton, Funk, Sullivan, and Ole Anderson. This TV taping had already been booked, however, and went off basically as written.

An angle had been suggested by JC, approved by Flair, and written into these shows where the MX would challenge Brian Pillman and Z-Man (Tom Zenk) for the United States Tag Title, to begin a program between the two teams.

In the match, the MX lost by DQ when they attacked Pillman and used the racket to injure his throat, to play up Pillman's amazing real-life story of having endured over 30 operations on his throat as a child to correct a rare cancer which left him with his distinctive raspy voice. Interviews were then shot telling this story, with Zenk and a barely-able-to-whisper Pillman vowing revenge. The finish played great live with a lot of heat and a scene of chaos, and the promos were strong.

Barnett, who liked Pillman as the next star babyface for WCW, thought the angle made Pillman "look weak" and that the throat angle should be saved to do with a "main event star", and went to Herd privately with that opinion.

At the next booking meeting, JC was told that the throat aspect of the angle was to be dropped, the taped interviews were not to air, and the announcers were instructed not to tell the back story.

Dumbfounded, JC asked why, and was told the above by Barnett, who added, "If it doesn't draw, blame ME!" Well, it DIDN'T draw, and JC DID blame Barnett. With the emotional teeth pulled out of the

angle, it became just another tag team wrestling program, but at least afforded the MX the opportunity to have more good tag matches with a different opposing team, at least when Zenk stayed on the apron and Pillman did most of the work.

Incidentally, in the six more years Pillman was with WCW, they never did do the throat angle with anyone, "main event stars" or not.

MARCH 1990

1 OFF		
2 Ft. Bragg, N.C.	Pillman over Eaton	\$42,000
3 Wilmington, N.C.	Morton over Eaton	
4 Rock Hill, S.C. TV	4 tapes--1 MX win	
5 Amarillo, Tx.	R&R over MX	\$22,000
6 Lubbock, TX.	R&R over MX	
7 Midland, Tx.	R&R over MX	
8 El Paso, Tx.	R&R over MX	
9 OFF		
10 Greenville, S.C.	R&R over MX	\$38,000
11 Danville, Va.	R&R over MX	\$6,700
12 Marietta, Ga. TBS TV	2tapes--1 MX win	

JC continued to double as color man with Jim Ross for the flagship Saturday TBS show, but another tooth was pulled in the MX angle with BP & Z-Man when the babyfaces came out during the MX squash match and took back the US Tag belts that the MX had stolen from them after injuring Pillman's throat in Altoona.

13 Columbus, Ga. TV 4 tapes
Pillman over Eaton

Coming back from the Texas tour for a few days in Georgia, JC finally had the opportunity to meet with Herd concerning their contracts. The MX's momentum and JC's pull, if any, on the committee had been hurt by Flair's resignation, but many of the remaining committee members, Ross, Sullivan and Funk in particular, knew the team's value and had no problem featuring them, so at least JC thought he had some ammo to renew their deals at at least the same terms. That assumption was way off.

"I went in to talk with Herd", JC recalls, "armed with all the facts--the ratings we'd done when featured, the matches we'd had that stole the shows, the ideas for opponents and programs, the schedule we'd worked without complaint when almost the entire roster had either injuries, personal problems or conflicts with the office. Here was Herd's offer as to what we'd do when our contracts were up in May--he wanted me to quit managing and become a fulltime

color announcer at my same terms."

"He was "willing" to renew Bobby Eaton for another year as a single babyface, which came out of the blue, and he would put Stan Lane on a "verbal deal" for 90 days as a single heel to see if they could come up with "any ideas for him". I was so shocked I didn't even yell at him. I had said to him several times in the past that if he could find any manager or team that could outperform us in any aspect of the business, we would step aside without a fight, but he had yet to do that. Now, we were coming off a 4 month period where we had been better than any time since 1988, and it meant nothing to this guy."

"I can't really explain in hindsight why we even tried to stay with these people, except at the time, besides guaranteed six figure incomes being hard to come by in wrestling, we still felt this was the NWA, our home, a company we had helped put over the top in the 80's. We loved living in Charlotte, never really seriously discussed the WWF where we knew we wouldn't fit in, and we still couldn't really believe that Herd would be there much longer and that a company as big as TBS would continue to mismanage something so badly. It HAD to get better, we thought, and we had too much time and work invested in it to give up--sort of like a really bad marriage that used to be great is hard to pull the trigger on ending."

"Now it was shit or get off the pot--I wasn't going to quit managing and change careers, and we weren't going to break up our team for one more year of employment with these people, especially when we knew that NEXT year, as three individuals, we'd be easier to screw than as a package. So as a last ditch effort, I went to JR, Kevin and a few others on the committee to work out what I thought was a compromise that would give everyone what they wanted."

"The Horsemen, due to Herd's continued refusal to hire Tully Blanchard and Ole's retirement from the ring, were down to 2 members, Flair and Arn Anderson. Woman (Nancy Sullivan, later Nancy Benoit) had established a relationship with Flair as a manager, and I would sell Bobby & Stan's contracts to her, making them Horsemen, and I would become a fulltime announcer. This gave Herd what he wanted with me, kept Bobby & Stan as a team, filled out the Horsemen with two guys who the fans saw as main-event talent and who could work at Horsemen level, and left the door open for us to reunite later as there was no "breakup", just a business deal."

"This idea was approved, and Flair was on

heard with it as well. With this understanding, I left on March 14, 1990 for a previously-planned vacation to Hawaii to wring out my brain and get away from all this horseshit."

The MX continued a full schedule while JC was in Hawaii, but with JC not wanting to think about wrestling, the records of those matches are not available. JC returned to the house shows March 22 in Toledo.

22 Toledo, Oh.

Pillman & Eddie Gilbert over MX

23 Chicago, Ill.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC \$70,000

24 St. Louis, Mo.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC \$53,000

25 Baltimore, Md.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC \$62,000

(Gates were beginning to show a little life with the Flair-Luger rematches on top.)

26 Johnstown, Pa. TV 4 tapes--1 MX win

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC DARK \$9,100

27 Canton, Oh. TBS TV 2 tapes

Z-Man over Lane DQ

Arriving at the TV taping, JC was met by Jim Ross, who looked like he'd rather be anywhere in the world but there as he delivered the news, as diplomatically as possible, that Herd in Atlanta had vetoed the whole MX-Horsemen agreement and everything about it. Predictably, JC went ballistic, not at JR but telling him some choice words to deliver to Herd. JR suggested that JC plead the case at the booking meeting scheduled for the next day, and JC responded that he wouldn't be there, because if he was, "I'll stick my fingers two knuckles deep in Jim Herd's eye sockets."

JC quit the booking committee on the spot and told JR to let Herd know that he wouldn't have any problems in the future with the MX because as soon as their contracts were up in May, all 3 would be gone for good. As professionals, the MX worked the tapings that night and JC also did color on both shows.

28 Harrisonburg, Va.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

29 Hampton, Va.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

Incredibly, as the MX & JC entered the locker room at the Hampton Coliseum, they were met by road agent Wahoo McDaniel, who told them that at the booking meeting, the committee and all the road agents had protested the situation to Herd and gotten

him to agree to renew all three members of the Express for another year at the same terms. Unspoken but implied was that they had shamed Herd for, if not lying, at least renegeing on yet another agreement with the three.

While the show of support from everyone in the office except Herd and Barnett was appreciated Wahoo was certainly surprised when the reaction to the "good news" by all 3 was an "Aw, shit!" and a tossing down of their bags. They couldn't turn down the money or make their supporters look bad, so the Express and JC were still stuck in WCW.

30 Richmond, Va.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

31 Knoxville, Tn.

Pillman & Z-Man over Eaton & K. Sullivan \$43,000

(Lane was off for the day--another strong house and hot crowd in Knoxville cemented JC's plans for Smoky Mountain Wrestling whenever his WCW sentence came to a close.)

APRIL 1990

1 Asheville, N.C. 2PM

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

Charlotte, N.C. 8PM

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

2 Gainesville, Ga. TV 2 tapes-

MX over Mark & Chris Youngblood

3 Gadsden, Al.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

4 OFF

5 Charlottesville, Va.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

6 Washington, D.C.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

7 Philadelphia, Pa.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC \$40,000

8 Atlanta, Ga.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

9 Greenwood, Miss. TV 4 tapes

MX over R&R

MX over Pillman & Z-Man Non Title

10 Little Rock, Ark. TBS TV 2 tapes--1 MX win

11 Springfield, Mo.

Pillman over Eaton

12 Kansas City, Mo.

Pillman over Eaton

13 Corpus Christi, Tx.

Pillman & Z-Man over Eaton & Cactus Jack

(Lane missed the above 3 events with a minor injury.)

14 Houston, Tx.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

15 San Antonio, Tx.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

(A classic illustration of WCW's live event promotion was booking an afternoon show on Easter Sunday in a predominantly Catholic city and drawing less than 600 fans in a 15,000 seat arena.)

16 Beaumont, Tx.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

17 Baton Rouge, La. TV 4 tapes

Pillman, Z-Man & R&R over MX & Birds DQ

18 Biloxi, Miss.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

19 OFF

20 Cincinnati, OH. Eaton drew Johnny Ace 20:00

21 Hammond, Ind. Lane over Johnny Ace \$23,000

22 Cedar Rapids, IA. Z-Man over Lane

23 Marietta, Ga. TV 4 tapes (MX OFF), JC promos

24 ATLANTA TBS TV 3tapes (MX OFF), JC Color

25 OFF

26 East Rutherford, N.J.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX USTTC

Pillman & Zenk over JC 5:00 \$123,000

(A rare strong gate for WCW at the Meadowlands in New Jersey, with a barnburner tag

match ending in Pillman & Zenk winning 5:00 with JC and beating him too. Amazingly, after being beaten like drums for months the MX still had enough heat to pull both of these bouts off.)

27 OFF

28 Ocala, Fla. R&R over MX \$10,000

29 Valdosta, Ga. R&R over MX \$2,900

30 Athens, Ga. Pillman & Z-Man over MX non title

MAY 1990

1 Rainsville, Al. TV

Pillman & Z-Man over MX DARK

2 Greenwood, S.C. TV

Pillman & Z-Man over MX DARK

3 OFF

4 Boston, Mass.

Johnny Ace over Eaton

Lane over Dutch Mantell

(This event was not held at the Boston Garden, but instead a small gym at a local college and was poorly attended.)

5 OFF

Certainly not enjoying their newfound status as the highest-paid job guys in the industry, the Express & JC spent this day off in their cheap hotel rooms in Boston. JC was sleeping off a flu and high fever and Eaton & Lane were watching TV and bored to tears,

Wrestling card gassed

By FRANK CAMPBELL
The Telegraph-Journal

SAINT JOHN

Organizers of the NWA Wrestling card scheduled for the Lord Beaverbrook Rink in Saint John on Monday found themselves grappling with an odorous intruder.

Ammonia.

"We had an ammonia leak in the building over the supper hour," said rink manager Dave Nicholson.

The pungent-smelling gas led the Fire Department to the scene and after more than two hours of fumigating the building with large fans, District Chief Gord McKay advised that it was unsafe to go on with the wrestling card.

"The room that the ice-making equipment is in is very large," McKay said. "There was a point reached that I considered it wasn't safe to continue with the evening's entertainment and it was cancelled."

The ammonia leak originated in the ice-

"There was a point reached that I considered it wasn't safe to continue with the evening's entertainment and it was cancelled."

District Chief Gord McKay

making plant when a valve was left opened slightly. "There was a loss of a small amount through a valve that had been opened. The expansion rate is quite high. It hits the atmosphere and expands."

The building had already been evacuated by the time the fire department arrived on the scene because people immediately want to get away from the foul smelling gas, McKay said. One fireman and six others later checked into hospital for examination.

"These people had some exposure to the gas. It causes their eyes to run," McKay said. "I advised them to go to the hospital. I don't think there was anything too serious."

Nicholson said an LBR staff worker called him to say he wouldn't be to work on Tuesday.

"His lungs were a bit irritated," Nicholson said, "but he'll be back in on Wednesday."

More irritating to some fans than the potential for exposure to ammonia gas was the realization that they wouldn't be exposed to any entertaining wrestling.

"Some of the fans were irritated," Nicholson said. "They waited a long time to get in and we can understand that. But it was really nobody's fault. It's just something that happened."

Nicholson said there had been a very brisk advance sale of tickets for the event. "Tickets will be refunded at the outlet they were purchased."

Finally, Nicholson said he is trying to reschedule the wrestling card. "The wrestling promoters have to go back to their headquarters in Atlanta. They would like to come back and they wished they could take care of it (rescheduling) here, but they have to get back to the people at their headquarters."

May 7, 1990

with an 11 day tour in front of them before they would see home again. This time, it was Stan Lane who cracked up and flew home with every intention of not coming back, although he did let Bobby and JC know he was leaving. Stan would be back on the tour 4 days later, but the stress and frustration was beginning to show on all three.

6 Frederickton, N.B.

R. Warriors over Eaton & K. Sullivan

7 St. John, N.B. SHOW CANCELLED

This event, the only one of the three Canadian events to draw more than a few hundred fans, was cancelled after an ammonia leak in the arena's ice hockey freezing equipment rendered the air in the building poisonous. Headlines in the next day's paper read, "Wrestling show gassed", to which JC responded, "It was a mercy killing". Once again the WCW talent spent another day on the road sitting in their hotel rooms.

8 Halifax, Nova Scotia Animal over Eaton

9 Syracuse, N.Y.

MX over J. Ace & Johnny Stewart

The MX's first tag team win, except at TV tapings, since early January was here over a local jobber and the bottom-rung babyface on the WCW roster, and the fans were still reacting to the team as if they were stars. It was the one thing, according to JC, that kept them motivated to go out and perform every night.

10 Rochester, N.Y.

MX over Ace & Stewart \$5,300

11 Saginaw, Mich. MX over Ace & Stewart

12 Detroit, Mich.

Scott Steiner & Mike Rotunda over MX

13 Chicago, Ill. Animal & Rotunda over MX

14 Indianapolis, Ind. TV--2 tapes

Pillman over Lane

In a rare appearance at a TV taping on the road, Jim Herd was in Indy, and walked up to JC and the Express with their new contracts in his hand. As he handed JC the envelope, his only comment was, "You know I was against this." JC resisted the urge to say "So were we", and Eaton held himself back from punching the idiot in the mouth.

15 Battle Creek, Mich. R&R over MX

16 Dayton, Oh. R&R over MX

17 OFF

18 OFF

19 WASHINGTON, D.C.-- DC ARMORY
CAPITOL COMBAT LIVE ON PPV

Midnight Express over Pillman & Z-Man
TO WIN USTTC

\$98,000

WCW MEETS THE GRUMPY OLD MAN WITH A GRUMPY OLD PLAN

After Flair's resignation in February, the interim committee was all over the page with even more infighting and personnel changes. By May, Terry Funk had decided to return to Texas and nurse sick horses was preferable to being part of WCW, and Herd continued to search for a head booker capable of doing the job and willing to take it. Bill Watts was interviewed, but refused to take the job when his demand to report only to TBS executive Jack Petrik and not WCW boss Herd was denied.

The TBS ratings had fallen by late April to 2.6 for WCW and 2.7 for the Sunday Main Event, nearly in half from Flair's record numbers in February. So on May 9, Herd installed Ole Anderson as booker, and more wholesale changes in talent and direction ensued. Ole had a track record of over 20 years as a top wrestler and booker, but it seemed to many that he couldn't adapt to the changes that had been forced on the industry by cable TV, PPV and guaranteed contracts.

Ole began bringing in stars that had drawn money for him 10 years earlier, some more than able to still go, like Paul Orndorff, and some who were ill-advised at best, like Junkyard Dog. He de-emphasized much of the contract talent and brought in green, cheap, musclehead talent, to reduce payroll and/or try something different, with generally little success. He took all heel color commentators off the TV shows, including JC, saying they were "too entertaining" to get any real heat, and boredom ensued.

In the transition, the MX had been booked by the committee third from the top, their highest position in awhile, on the Capitol Combat PPV challenging Pillman and Z-Man for the United States Tag Title, with JC in a cage at ringside. Surprisingly, the Express won the titles.

"I have no idea why we won that match", JC recalls. "Herd hated us. Once we won the belts, we had few successful title defenses. With Ole booking we were buried worse than ever, probably because he just didn't feel like arguing with Herd about us when he had things that were more important to him to get past the moron. But we had just signed our contracts two days earlier, and when we were given the finish,

FLASH

OF THE

Champions

II

WORLD TITLE BOUT



JUNKYARD DOG vs. RIC FLAIR

WORLD TAG TITLE BOUT



THE STEINERS vs. DOOM

U.S. TAG TITLE BOUT



ROCK'n'ROLL EXPRESS vs. MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

NOTE: CARD SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Wednesday

7PM
7:30PM

CNN) MONEYLINE—Lou Dobbs

DSC) RENDEZVOUS—Travel

ESN) SPORTSCENTER

FAM) MOVIE—Biography (BW);

2 hrs., 30 min. ★★★

"The Joker Is Wild." (1957) A semifactual account of night-club comedian Joe E. Lewis's career. A good Frank Sinatra performance and Oscar-winning tune "All the Way." Mitzi Gaynor, Jeanne Crain, Eddie Albert

HTS) ORIOLES REPORT

LIF) MOONLIGHTING; 60 min.

MTV) HALF HOUR COMEDY HOUR

NIK) DENNIS THE MENACE—Comedy (BW)

TNN) MUSIC ROW VIDEO; 60 min.

USA) MIAMI VICE—Crime Drama; 60 min.

WGN) ABBOTT AND COSTELLO—Comedy (BW)

7:05 TBS) JEFFERSONS (CC)—Comedy

7:30 2) GOOD EVENING

3) 10) PM MAGAZINE

4) 12) INSIDE EDITION—Newsmagazine

5) 7) FAMILY FEUD—Game

8) 13) 13) JEOPARDY! (CC)—Game

9) ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT—Magazine

Scheduled: Michael Tucker and Jill Eikenberry.

11) WHEEL OF FORTUNE (CC)—Game

15) WHO'S THE BOSS? (CC)—Comedy

Angela thinks she's hired the perfect model for

TV Guide

June 13, 1990

DON'T MISS THIS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING ALL-STAR LINE-UP OF MUSCLE MAYHEM!

WCW

Coastal

CRASH

8:05PM

TBS

denial set in and we deluded ourselves into thinking we were being put back on top, so the boys went out and had another great tag match, winning the USTTC for the third time."

As far as business, the event did a \$98,000 gate live, and a 1.3 buy rate, or about 160,000 buys, well down from February for the Flair-Luger rematch in a cage, but this could be partially explained by the fewer viewers watching TV and the anticipation of Sting's return from knee surgery in July.

May 1990

20 OFF

21 Montgomery, Al. TV 3 tapes--1 MX win

MX over Pillman & Z-Man non title

22 Ozark, Al. Road Warriors over MX non title

23 Gainesville, Ga. TBS TV 2tapes--1 MX win

24 Memphis, Tn. MX over Road Warriors non title

The Road Warriors & Paul Ellering were the latest of the NWA legends to be fed up with Herd, and were finishing up to leave for the WWF. At this show, even though they were on the way out, they were booked to beat the Express. Hawk & Animal, due to the respect they had for the MX and the money matches they had had with them, spoke up and changed the finish to the MX winning--so, in this match, the MX became one of the few teams to beat the Road Warriors by pinfall in their 6 year tenure in the NWA/WCW.

25 St. Louis, Mo.

Warriors over MX non title \$30,000

Having gotten heat the previous night for changing an office finish regardless of their intentions, the Warriors constructed this finish where Ellering pinned JC, even though neither manager was actually in the match, thus technically winning while still refusing to beat the MX.

26 Springfield, Mo. Steiners over MX non title

27-28 OFF

29 Roanoke, Va. TBS TV 4 tapes--1 MX match

30 Raleigh, N.C.

MX over Pillman & Z-Man USTTC

31 OFF

JUNE 1990

1-3 OFF

4 Anderson, SC. TV 4 tapes--2 MX wins \$20,000(SO)

(The new Anderson Civic Center opens, with double the capacity of the old building, and nudges out the MX-Mulkeys record gate from 1987 by a few thousand dollars.)

5 Bristol, Tn.

MX over Pillman & Z-Man USTTC

6 Columbia, S.C.

MX over Pillman & Z-Man USTTC \$13,000

Rolling out of the ring after helping the MX win, JC was punched in the head by a front-row fan, and responded with several racket shots that left the guy with a few head lacerations and a cracked wrist

A potential lawsuit was averted as even though the incident made the papers and TV news, among the witnesses who saw JC get punched first were the police, the state athletic commissioner, and Mike Campbell, son of South Carolina governor Carroll Campbell and a huge wrestling fan.

7 Fayetteville, N.C. R&R over MX non title

8 Gastonia, N.C. Southern Boys over MX non title

9 Beckley, W.Va. Southern Boys over MX non title

10 Frankfort, Ky. Southern Boys over MX non title

11-12 OFF

13 Charleston, S.C.

TBS CLASH OF CHAMPIONS 11

R&R over MX DQ USTTC

This was a strong effort by both teams, but rushed due to time constraints and just didn't gel like their February PPV match. As far as business, this Clash, headlined by Flair vs. JYD for the NWA Title, was indicative of Ole's "Senior's Tour" booking, as some had named it. It was the second lowest rated Clash ever of the 11 broadcast to that point, doing a 4.1 rating and 7.5 share in 2,223,000 homes, beating only the June 1989 Clash, coming off the disastrous George Scott regime.

14-15 OFF

16 Augusta, Ga.

R&R over MX DQ USTTC \$31,000

17 Atlanta, Ga. R&R over MX non title

18 Marietta, Ga. TBS TV 2 tapes

(MX OFF), JC promos

19-22 OFF

23 Knoxville, Tn. MX DDQ Freebirds USTTC

24 OFF

25 Gainesville, Ga. TV-- JC promos

With JC taken off color with all the other heels, and the MX mostly off syndication and the TBS programs even though still USTTC, JC made many of these TV tapings just to do his 3:00 "Louisville Slugger" interview segments, turn around, and go back home.

26 Niagara Falls, Ont.

Pillman over Eaton, Scott Steiner over Lane

27 Toronto, Canada
 Southern Boys over MX
 28 Brantford, Ont.
 Eaton over Nick DeCarlo
 Scott Steiner over Lane
 Ricky Morton over Eaton
 29-30 OFF

JULY 1990

1 OFF
 2 Marietta, Ga. TV 4 tapes--1 MX win
 3 OFF
 4 Greensboro, N.C.
 Southern Boys over MX non title
 5 Myrtle Beach, S.C.
 Southern Boys over MX non title
 6 Norfolk, Va.
 Southern Boys over MX non title
 7 Baltimore, Md.—The Arena
Great American Bash '90 Live on PPV
 MX over Southern Boys USTTC

This match was possibly the Express' best broadcast match since the first Clash in 1988 vs. the Fantastics. The Southern Boys, Tracy Smothers and Steve Armstrong, an excellent babyface tag team, predictably entered the arena in Baltimore to a smattering of boos and a lot of indifference from the Northeastern crowd. Twenty minutes later, after both teams worked their asses off, they both received a standing ovation from the crowd after having what was variously reported as "the best American tag match of this year" and "one of the best 17:00 bouts you'll ever see."

Some rated it the best match on the card, even better than the long-awaited Flair vs. Sting NWA Title main event, and it won or placed in several industry newsletter match of the year polls.

"I think the only reason we won the match", JC said, "was because they didn't want to switch the belts or do a DQ. Steve and Tracy were a great team and everything clicked. Of course, with the exception of a short match on syndication and the house shows which were drawing next to nothing, we were never booked against them again. The match was too good for guys who they didn't WANT to be good."

Sting's return was good for PPV, doing an estimated 2.0 buy rate in 285,000 homes, but after Flair lost the Title, it occurred to people they'd rather see Sting chase it than actually hold it.

8 Roanoke, Va.
 R&R over MX non title

9 Gainesville, Ga. TV 4 tapes
 MX over T. Rich & T Horner
 10 OFF
 11 New York City
 The Express & JC were flown to New York for an appearance on MTV's "Awake on the Wild Side". Even if not in favor with management, WCW recognized the boys were among the few on the roster who could be entertaining in a mainstream media environment. Chyna Kantner, cohost and daughter of rock star Grace Slick, was especially entertained by Sweet Stan Lane.

12 Tulsa, Ok.
 Southern Boys over MX non title \$32,000
 13 Dallas, Tx.
 Southern Boys over MX non title
 14 St. Louis, Mo.
 MX over Southern Boys USTTC \$30,000
 15 OFF
 16 Gainesville, GA. TV MX off--JC promo segment
 17-18 OFF
 19 Savannah, Ga. Steiner Bros over MX non title
 20 Augusta, Ga. Steiner Bros. over MX non title
 21 St. Petersburg, Fla.
 Steiners over Eaton & Buddy Landell \$32,000
 22 Miami, Fla.
 Steiners over Eaton & Landell
 23 Gainesville, Ga. TV MX OFF, JC promo segment
 24-25 OFF
 26 Charleston, S.C.
 Steiners over MX non title \$29,000
 27 Richmond, Va.
 Steiners over MX non title
 28-29 OFF
 30 Gainesville, Ga. TV (MX OFF) JC promo segment
 31 OFF

AUGUST 1990

1-2 OFF
 3 Pittsburgh, Pa
 MX over Brad Armstrong & Cuban Assassin
 4 Philadelphia, Pa. MX over Brad & Cuban
 5 Norfolk, Va. MX over Brad & Cuban
 6 Marietta, Ga. TV 4 tapes
 R&R over MX non title
 Pillman & Z-Man over MX DQ USTTC
 After weeks of being off TV, the MX are brought back to lose to the R&R on syndication, then lose to Pillman & Zenk on WCW on TBS. In the finish, an angle was set up between Bobby and Sid Vicious which would lead to the worst Bobby Eaton



match in history weeks later.

7-8 OFF

9 Raleigh, N.C.

MX over Brad Armstrong & Brad Anderson

10 Johnson City, Tn. MX over Brad & Brad non title

11 Portsmouth, Oh. MX over Brad & Brad non title

12 Canton, Oh. MX over Brad & Brad non title

13 Gainesville, Ga. TV 4 tapes

MX OFF, JC Promo segment

14-15 OFF

16 Chattanooga, Tn. Steiner Bros. over MX non title

17 Hartwell, Ga. Steiner Bros. over MX non title

18 Muscle Shoals, Al.

Steiner Bros. over MX non title \$13,000

19 OFF

20 Marietta, Ga. TV-- 4 tapes

Horner & Armstrong MX DQ

21 Indianapolis, Ind.

Pillman & Terry Taylor over MX non title

22 Ft. Wayne, Ind.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX non title

23 Allentown, Pa.

Pillman & Z-Man over MX non title

24 East Rutherford, N.J.

Steiner Bros. over MX TO WIN USTTC \$111,000

Another strong gate in what was now WCW's best, and really only consistently good market, saw the MX drop the USTTC to Rick & Scott Steiner. The MX's matches in the arenas with the Steiners were always very good, but despite this and the obvious potential in a hot angle and promos between the teams, it was never done. Except for one short, fast-paced and critically acclaimed bout between the two teams on syndicated TV, they never faced off on any other broadcast, just arena matches. In 3 months as USTTC, the MX had less than 10 successful title defenses, and the belts were in such limbo that on this night the Steiners didn't even want to win them

AN OFFER HE COULDN'T REFUSE, BUT DID ANYWAY

Shortly after dropping the belts to the Steiners, JC called Herd from the road and made him a proposal. "I told him our deal made no financial sense for WCW", JC remembers. "because we were all 3 making six-figure salaries to fill a spot that could be occupied by local guys, or guys on verbal deals making half what we were. I was off color, we weren't being used on TV, we were losing prelims every night, and we knew he didn't like us and had no plans for us. So

the offer was, pay us half of what he owed us on the rest of our contracts and we would go away, and he could save the cost of flying us all over the country and replace the three of us with two cheaper guys. Both sides would have what they wanted. His response to me, in these exact words, were "I don't want to set that precedent."

"Less than a year later he bought out Jimmy Garvin's two year, \$150,000 per year contract just to get him to go away, paying him \$180,000 in one lump sum and setting that precedent. So basically the prick didn't want us to leave with anything, he just wanted us to leave. Pretty soon, he got his way."

JC circled May 1991 on his calendar as his parole date, and continued to sketch out plans for Smoky Mountain Wrestling during all the long car and plane trips that followed.

25 Baltimore, Md.	Steiners over MX USTTC
26 Chicago, Ill.	Steiners over MX USTTC
27 Gainesville, Ga. TV 4 tapes	
(MX OFF), JC promo segment	
28 Macon, Ga.	Pillman & Z-Man over MX
29 Rome, Ga.	Pillman & Z-Man over MX
30 Fayetteville, N.C.	Steiners over MX
31 Augusta, Ga.	Pillman over Eaton

WCW ratings on TBS continued to drop, scoring in the low 2's by the end of August, almost at the all-time lows of the George Scott era.

September 1990

1 Greensboro, N.C.	
MX over Pillman & Z-Man	
2 Knoxville, Tn.	
MX over Z-Man & Hector Guerrero	
The houses for WCW in Knoxville, once regularly near sellouts with hot crowds, were beginning to drop because of the frequent no-shows and/or false advertising in key matches, leaving JC to believe there was a large base of wrestling fans there dissatisfied with the product they were receiving.	
3 Gainesville, Ga. TV 4 tapes--1 MX win	
MX DDQ Steiners	
4-6 OFF	
7 Amarillo, Tx.	
Hector Guerrero & Terry Taylor over MX	
8 Lubbock, Tx.	Hector & Taylor over MX
9 Ft. Worth, Tx.	Hector & Taylor over MX
10 Gainesville, Ga. TV 4 tapes	
Scott Steiner over Eaton	

Doom (Simmons & Reed) over MX WTTC
MX over S. Boys

11-13 The only notations in JC's records for these shows in Dayton, Canton and Portsmouth, Ohio, where the MX were scheduled against Pillman and Z-Man, were that he was, quote,"(PISSSED) OFF", and while we assume the MX made these dates, even JC doesn't remember exactly why he did not go.

14 Columbus, Oh.

MX over Pillman & Z-Man

15 Detroit, Mich.

MX over Pillman & Z-Man \$13,000

16 Hammond, Ind.

MX over Pillman & Z-Man

17 Marietta, Ga. TBS TV 4 tapes

Terry Taylor over Lane

Eaton over Tracy Smothers

Eaton over Ricky Morton

Sid Vicious over Bobby Eaton

Steiners over MX USTTC DARK

Well, WCW got their money's worth out of the MX this night. The TBS shows had instituted a gimmick where one man would be chosen to "Run the Gauntlet", with matches on the Friday night Power Hour, Saturday WCW and Sunday Main Event shows, and if he won all 3 matches he would get a prize.

Bobby won over Smothers on Friday, beat Morton on Saturday after a 15:00 draw in a 5:00 overtime, then lost to Sid in the long awaited match between the two which saw Vicious too big and awkward for Bobby to do anything with him. Lane lost to Terry Taylor on syndication, then the MX lost to the Steiners in a dark match. On the way out of the building, the MX were looking for the popcorn guy to lay down for him. Needless to say, JC did NOT have a Happy Birthday.

18 Jasper, Ga.	Terry Taylor over Eaton	
19 Rock Hill, S.C.	Tommy Rich over Eaton	\$3,000
20 Raleigh, N.C.	Freebirds over MX	
21-27 OFF		
28 Ft. Pierce, Fla.		

Brad Armstrong over Eaton

Mike Rotunda over Lane

29 Nassau, Bahamas Z-Man over Eaton

Knowing full well the filthy conditions and dangerous crowds in the Bahamas, JC and Lane, not inclined to risk their lives or health for WCW, "missed the plane" for this event, while Eaton, showing his

professionalism and dedication to the business, went
and lost to Zenk in a mud-filled ring while being pelt-
ed with rocks and manure by the natives.
30 Sunrise, Fla. Southern Boys over MX

OCTOBER 1990

- 1 Gainesville, Ga. TV 4 tapes--1 MX win
Steiners over MX TBS Sat. night show
- 2 Columbia, S.C.
Eaton over Allen Iron Eagle
Juicer (Art Barr) over Lane
- 3 Greenville, S.C. R&R over MX
- 4 OFF
- 5 Greensboro, N.C. Morton & Iron Eagle over MX
- 6 Washington, D.C. Morton & Taylor over MX
- 7 Charlottesville, Va. Morton & Taylor over MX
- 8 Marietta, Ga. TV 1 MX win
- 9 Atlanta, Ga. TBS TV 1 MX win
(Angle started with Southern Boys)
Jim Ross and JC had talked, and there was a
spot open on the November Clash and potentially the
December PPV for the MX. WCW had signed El
Gigante (Jorge Gonzales), a 7'6" giant who had played
pro basketball in Argentina, and been signed by the
Atlanta Hawks NBA team but had been a failed exper-
iment.
WCW picked him up and was trying to get
him over. JC suggested that 6 man tags with the
Southern Boys teaming with Jorge vs. the MX and JC
would not only get Tracy and Steve spots on the big
shows along with the MX, but get the giant over as JC
would take a slam and pin from the big green monster.
TV's in October began working in this direction, but
JC's offer soon backfired on him.
"I saw the November booking sheets", JC
says, "and not only were we booked for the Clash, but
about 6 weeks' straight of house shows for these 6
mans where I would be risking my neck taking a
slam and God knows what else from this behemoth,
who was a great guy but completely clueless.
Needless to say, I wasn't happy, but I had done
worse, so it wasn't a deal breaker yet."
10 OFF
- 11 Melbourne, Fla. Steiners over MX USTTC
- 12 St. Petersburg, Fla. Steiners over MX USTTC
- 13-14 OFF
- 15 Montgomery, Al. TV 4 tapes--1 MX win
MX over Southern Boys
- 16-17 OFF
- 18 Canton, Oh. Steiners over MX USTTC

19 Altoona, Pa.

Steiners over MX USTTC

A near riot occurred when the MX got so
much heat in this match that a fan jumped over the
guard rail and attacked Eaton. Bobby snatched him
around the waist, and JC came around the corner of
the ring and whacked him in the head with the tennis
racket, busting him open with a 4 inch gash on the
forehead.

The only security for the event were a few
rent-a-cops, who simply escorted the guy out and told
him to leave, after taking their time to arrive on the
scene at all. When security went back inside, so did
the fan--bleeding profusely and covered in blood, he
walked back to ringside like a zombie and tried to go
after JC, stirring the whole crowd up in the process.
Sensing a potential riot, the MX quickly dropped the
fall in the confusion and while the outmanned security
tried to quell the surging crowd, the MX grabbed their
bags and took off without stopping to change.

In the chaos, several fans called police to
report a riot at the arena, and almost a dozen police
cars and two ambulances responded. The fan col-
lapsed and was carted off to the hospital, and the MX
made it to the interstate and headed to Philadelphia
while the police sorted out the mess and Rick Steiner
tried to play with the police dogs at the arena.

Pursuing police couldn't catch the MX, and the
story made not only the local papers but was picked
up on the AP wire the next day, where the story
changed to one where the fan was simply "standing at
the rail taking photos" when JC went over and bludge-
oned him over the head for no reason. A fair amount
of heat for a prelim team that hadn't won a match in
months.

20 Asbury Park, N.J.

Steiners over MX USTTC

21 OFF

22 Gainesville, Ga. TV 3 tapes--1 MX win

23-24 OFF

25 Norfolk, Va. Southern Boys over MX \$10,000

26 Richmond, Va. Southern Boys over MX

27 CHICAGO, ILL.--UIC PAVILLION

HALLOWEEN HAVOC LIVE ON PPV

Tommy Rich & Ricky Morton over MX

The low point of the MX's tenure with WCW
and the beginning of the end. Booked as MX vs. Rock
& Roll, Robert Gibson had suffered a serious knee
injury and was replaced by Tommy Rich. Placed in

the first match, the MX were beaten in the curtain-jerker by a makeshift team in a near 20:00 match that was still one of the two best on the card, with the MX going all-out to make the match as good as it could be. A highlight was an incredible spot where Stan rocket-launched Bobby off the top rope onto the wooden entrance ramp in a splash on Morton.

Later, JC was asked to interfere in the Southern Boys match, dressed in a Confederate General's uniform in keeping with the Halloween-themed comedy booking. Ole Anderson actually instructed JC that the Southern Boys would then hit him over the head with a Jack-O-Lantern, where he would then run around the ring with a pumpkin over his head.

"I responded", JC recalls, "by telling Ole I would wear the costume, but I wasn't going to run around with a pumpkin on my head. Ole countered with, "You're from Tennessee, Nick Gulas used to do that shit all the time." I responded by slaying him with, "Yeah, but the difference is, Nick Gulas drew money." I got with the Southern Boys and worked out a deal where they tossed me in the ring, ripped the costume off, spanked me, and I ran off. I got heat because WCW was supposed to return the costume on Monday, and now they had to pay for it."

28 Farmland, Ind.

Southern Boys over MX \$11,000
29 Anderson, S.C. TV--4 tapes

Steve Armstrong over Lane

After flying back from Chicago to Charlotte, with no time to even stop by their homes, the MX hopped in their car at the Charlotte airport and drove to the TV in Anderson where they found that of the 4 tapes being shot that night, they were figured into none of them except for a Power Hour match where Lane would lose to Steve Armstrong.

Eaton could have had a day off to spend with his wife and children, but instead was now stuck in Anderson because no one had bothered to tell him he was off. The MX spent 7 hours sitting in the arena for a 6:00 single match, then drove to Atlanta, arriving at 2am, eating at Waffle House, and getting to sleep by 4am to rest for the Atlanta TV taping the next day.

30 Atlanta, Ga. TBS TAPING CENTRE STAGE

THE LAST STRAW

The fact that Jim Cornette and Stan Lane walked out of the Center Stage TV tapings and quit

WCW on October 30, 1990 has been reported in various wrestling publications over the last 18 years, but a complete first-person account has never been published until now. Here, in JC's own words, is a complete account of the incident:

"The ill will between the WCW office and the three of us, the disrespect for our work, the mismanagement of the company by Herd, all of this has been documented in this book. Even though my last blowup was with Ole, he was really just a surrogate for Herd in this situation because all of my dealings with Herd in 1990 had a cumulative effect, and just spilled over on this night. Ole was a grumpy, crusty old bastard, but at least it was possible to respect him for the success he had achieved, the talents he had displayed in pro wrestling."

"Herd had no talents, had never successfully accomplished one thing, in wrestling at least, and I resented him to my bones for taking a job he was too egotistical to know he was completely unsuited for, and in the process ruin my profession and hurt my career. He did the same for dozens, possibly hundreds of my friends and fellow workers in the sport who were in some cases never able to fully recover their careers and/or provide for themselves and their families because of decisions made directly or indirectly by this asshole."

"We got up on Tuesday afternoon worn out from the miserable weekend, and I remember thinking in the car that after being consumed by pro wrestling 24/7 for almost my entire life, I now hated going to a show and couldn't wait to get out once I got there. We arrived at the building about 3:00pm, went to the wall to read the lineup, and after doing practically nothing the night before, that night we had FOUR matches, and of course would be losing all four."

"Make no mistake--we never had a problem doing the job, and in fact the only finish we ever changed in our careers was to put the other team over, but it was simply business that if you NEVER won, you couldn't be taken seriously in a money spot, and hence, your expendability factor increased."

"As a matter of fact, it had gone so far that we were having trouble being heels, as even the fans could tell something was up with this former top tag team that couldn't beat anyone and had been muzzled on TV interviews, and were actually beginning to cheer for us as apparently they felt sorry for us."

"I went into Ole's office to complain about working four times in one night, since by that point

November 1, 1990

Mr. James Cornette
11129 Meadowcrest
Charlotte, NC 28226

Dear Mr. Cornette:

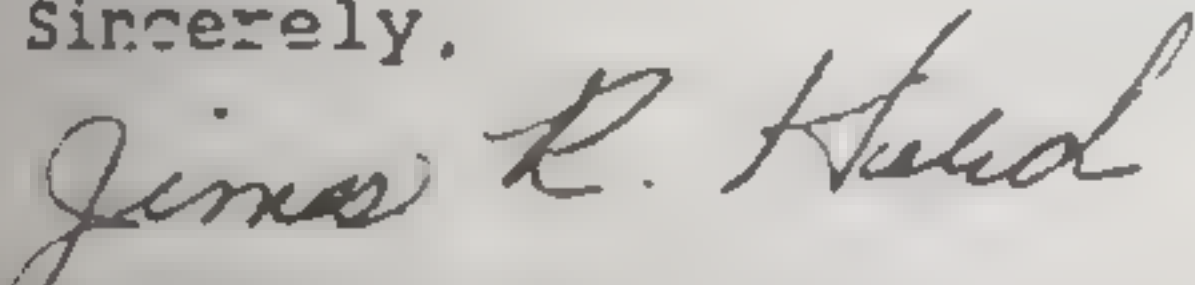
The reports to me from Center Stage Theater indicate that there was a misunderstanding involving you and the Booker Ole Anderson.

I have had further conversations with people close to you that indicate that you have been quoted as saying you will not return to WCW.

The company must take the position that if you do not make your scheduled commitments starting on November 1, 1990 in Boone, North Carolina, November 2, 1990 in Albany, Georgia, November 7, 1990 in Valdosta, Georgia and other November dates where you and the Midnight Express were specifically advertised, WCW will consider you in breach of your contract and no further monetary compensation will be paid to you.

If you have a desire to try to resolve this issue, please contact me.

Sincerely,



James R. Herd
Executive Vice President

everything was done in post-production, and asked why we couldn't have at least done one or two of them the previous night, or if not, why couldn't somebody have told Bobby he could have stayed home with his family. Ole responded by telling me something he's probably said to 1,000 different wrestlers over the years, "If you don't like it, go home!", but in this case, all I could see was Herd's face, and all I heard was a good idea. I said, "You know what, Ole, that's the best suggestion anybody's ever given me!"

"He said, 'You'll be sorry', I replied 'No, I won't', and I walked out of the room. Stan was in the hallway, and I asked for his car keys so I could get my stuff because I was going home, and he said 'Wait a minute, I'll go with you!'"

"Then we looked at Bobby, who we knew was stuck in a bad situation as, unlike either of us, he had three children to think about, and we both told him he should stay and take their money. May wasn't all that far in the future and nobody foresaw WCW renewing

him after all the problems we'd already had."

"Stan and I got in the car and drove to Charlotte like two men that had just escaped Devil's Island. Ole, apparently thinking we weren't really serious, kept asking Bobby, 'Where are they? When will they be back?' to which Bobby would reply, 'About halfway to Charlotte, and they aren't coming back!'"

"A few days later, Herd sent us letters citing a "misunderstanding" between Ole and I, stating that if we came back within a certain period of time, there would be no repercussions, otherwise we would be considered in breach of our contracts. We ignored these. Weeks later, I called Herd and told him I needed a release, that I had some things I wanted to do and was going to do them, so he could either release me or sue me, it didn't matter to me."

"He replied that he wasn't going to "just let me walk right into the WWF", and I told him that I'd just left a company that had turned wrestling into a phony cartoon and I wasn't about to join another. After telling

me he would send a release that contained a clause preventing me from going to work for WWF, but when I got the release it made no mention of that, so he couldn't even do that right."

"The last Midnight Express match was scheduled to be a benefit show that we had been cleared to do for our friend, promoter Dennis Corraluzzo, but an old knee injury of Bobby's had flared up, so he was unable to wrestle on it. Instead, on November 9, 1990, in Drexel Hill, Pa., a suburb of Philadelphia, Stan teamed with Eddie Gilbert, with Bobby and I in the corner, to take on Terry Funk and Cactus Jack, with my old friend Mark Curtis in their corner, in the last official appearance of the Midnight Express together until 2004."

"I went about my plans setting up Smoky Mountain Wrestling to begin operations in late 1991, intending to use the Express as my top team, but it was not to be. The universal respect Bobby had among every booker or committee installed in WCW after we left (Ole was fired in late November and replaced by Dusty) saw them renew his contract every year when it came up, over any of Herd's objections. As a matter of fact, Bobby outlasted Herd, who resigned in January 1992, after WCW house show attendance, TV ratings and PPV buys had dropped to all-time record low levels, without ever accepting any of the blame for mismanaging the company so badly it didn't turn a profit until 8 years after TBS purchased it."

"Even though he was never again used as prominently as he had been with the Express, Bobby had many more great matches for the company and remained on the talent roster until 1999, making him the longest-lasting employee of WCW in its history, 14 years after he first went to work for Jim Crockett."

"Stan had lost much of his passion for wrestling, and after his 1991-1993 run with me in Smoky Mountain Wrestling, teaming with Tom Prichard as the Heavenly Bodies, he made one more tour of Japan, then retired from in-ring competition. His wrestling appearances since have been mostly limited to a few reunions of the Fabulous Ones, and the several high-profile Midnight Express reunions of the past few years, but as of 2009 he says he's wrestled his last match, and we believe him."

"In Spring 1991, Dusty, who had replaced Ole as booker, called me to Atlanta for a meeting, which I attended out of respect for what he had done for us, and asked me to come back to WCW. I declined as

long as Jim Herd was still there."

"In 1992, Bill Watts finally got the job, and we began speaking on the phone, leading to a talent-exchange deal with Smoky Mountain Wrestling where the Heavenly Bodies and Rock & Roll Express returned for dates in WCW, including a match on Superbrawl '93 on PPV. In return, Bobby was booked out to SMW for 90 days to join the Bodies as a three-man team, and we got several dates on Arn Anderson as well."

"This was to be the beginning of a working relationship between the two companies, as Watts was a man I could trust, but when TBS management failed to give the Cowboy the control over the wrestling product he had been promised, he quit and went back to Tulsa, and the PPV match (which by the way, stole the show again) was the last appearance Stan or I ever made for WCW."

"It bears stating in summation that Vince McMahon and the WWF did not have to win the "wrestling war", in my opinion. The WWF in-ring product was inferior and their financing certainly did not equal TBS'. The reason WCW ultimately lost was the precedent of mismanagement set by Jim Herd, and the attempts of TBS management to present a similar "sports entertainment" style that came off as a bad copy instead of an alternative product based on a real sports presentation that its fans wanted, a viewpoint bolstered by the millions of wrestling fans from the 80's who went away there was no more "real wrestling", and never came back."

"Vince, conversely, won because he was smarter, ran a better organized company, and had a vision that, whether good for pro wrestling or not, was better for the WWF. WCW never recovered from the hole Herd dug them in the first 3 years, only turned a profit during Eric Bischoff's accidental epiphany of buying up ex-WWF stars and celebrities and hotshotting to the moon in 1996-1999, then crashed. With Bischoff unable to follow up on his success, spending money like a drunken sailor, and the most inane buckshot booking ever seen in the sport in 2000, WCW lost 60 million dollars, and was sold to Vince at a fire sale price of a few million bucks in 2001."

"The WWF, meanwhile, alienated many traditional wrestling fans with its show biz presentation in the early '90's, and this, accompanied by Vince's steroid scandal/trial and subsequent bad publicity, led to the "wrestling recession" of the early to mid '90's where the business was in the worst shape it had been

since the World War 2 years. In 1995, the WWF lost \$6 million."

"By 1996-97, led by the emergence of Steve Austin and the Rock, spurred by having his ass kicked by WCW during their hot period, and beginning to build a fan base who accepted his product as "entertainment" rather than sport, Vince began to regain the lead. Since 1999 he has been the industry giant, going public with a stock sale in 2001 that made him a billionaire on paper, buying the crumbled WCW, and dropping any pretense of reality by changing his company's name to World Wrestling Entertainment."

"While "sports entertainment" is a dirty word to me and most wrestling fans of 20 years ago, and it's product is mostly unwatchable to the same folks because it makes them sad and nostalgic for the good old days, it's worked for Vince because of the fact that he stayed with his vision over a decade of re-educating the public and building a new fan base. It killed the pro wrestling business in general, because after seeing the parody of the business, fans became immune to the old tactics that got real "heat." Wrestling will never again draw the huge, regular crowds all across the country that it once did. But it's been very, very profitable for the WWE."

"In my mind, the only reason this re-education process worked so well, and gave Vince a virtual monopoly on the wrestling industry, is because for almost the entire decade that it took to build a fan base for his product, there was no viable competition with similar vision and organization presenting an alternative product."

"In the '80's, both WWF and the NWA were red-hot, WWF with the fad audience of Hulkamania and Rock & Wrestling, a strong office staff and one man in charge. The NWA had the traditional wrestling fans, an unbeatable in-ring product, and while the office staff was in over their heads, with the right financial support it would have been a hard product to topple. The gate records, attendance and ratings in this book bear that out. But by the 90's Vince was virtually alone."

"While TBS never understood what they had purchased, had there been a leader in charge with any vision, people skills, or capability of understanding either what his customers wanted or common sense to listen to anyone with that understanding, while filtering out the bullshit, it would have been at least a harder fight if not a different story."

"WCW had the talent, the fan base and the

money, and their own TV networks and home video companies to distribute the product. All they needed was a leader. For this reason, I nominate Jim Herd, not Vince McMahon, as the man who ruined professional wrestling."

"But climbing off the soapbox, I take comfort in the fact that 25 years after we first began, and 18 years after our last match, the Midnight Express matches are still viewed by fans and aspiring young wrestlers and considered classic contests and learning experiences that they continue to study and emulate."

"I take pride in the fact that my TV promos and ringside work have caused many to say I was the "greatest manager of all time", although in my opinion that honor goes to my good friend Bobby Heenan and I am just glad to be in the running. I am thrilled that as a longtime wrestling fan I was actually able to say that I managed TWO of the greatest tag teams in the history of the sport, and that together we set attendance records that in some cases will never be broken."

"I am happy that our matches and TV appearances entertained so many people that whenever I am recognized to this day, the first words out of that person's mouth are not about SMW, or WWF, or OVW, or TNA, but in most cases simply "Midnight Express!"

"If that leaves me in an Orson Welles Citizen Kane scenario where I retain a level of fame for years but never exceed my earliest, greatest accomplishment, so be it. I will always be able to say that I was part of a group that was the best in the world at what we did, and I got to do it with three of my best friends, and that is a rare accomplishment for anyone. So all in all, the Midnight Express had a hell of a ride."



Wrestling Perspective

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Editors' Award For Lifetime Achievement

The Midnight Express (Bobby Eaton & Stan Lane) With Jim Cornette

There was a Midnight Express of note before Stan Lane. There was a Midnight Express before Bobby Eaton. The lineage starts with the trio of Randy Rose, Norvell Austin, and Dennis Condrey. But that unit was really just a blip on the radar screen. It wasn't until Condrey formed a Midnight Express with Bobby Eaton and manager Jim Cornette that the name had meaning on the big stage.

The team of Bobby Eaton and Dennis Condrey was good.

Damn good.

The duo won numerous titles, put people in the seats, and were considered among the very best tag teams in the world (back when that actually meant something). Much of that had to do with their great in-ring style and ability to work as a single unit. A lot of it also had to do with their outrageous and outstanding manager, Jim Cornette, who set himself from the rest of the managers – back when being a manager also meant something – with his mouth, work ethic, creativity, and passion for the business.

While the Express played to packed houses in the World Class, Mid-South, and Mid-Atlantic areas, there was another tag team excelling in the Memphis territory: The Fabulous Ones. The team of Stan Lane and Steve Keirn was of similar size to the Express, and also had an incredible ability to work great matches and put the fans through the turnstiles. Their charisma rivaled that of Memphis's King, Jerry Lawler.

Then the two teams were no more.

The Fabs broke up when Keirn took a temporary leave from the business, while the charismatic Lane slipped into semi-retirement. As Lane told us in Issue 19: "I was sort of just wandering aimlessly...I was kind of in a limbo zone there."

Shortly after that, Condrey disappeared from the Express. Well, actually he just disappeared. While the team was enjoying a high profile run in Jim Crockett's World Championship Wrestling, Condrey just stopped showing up

one day in 1987. He never told Eaton or Cornette why. As Eaton told us in Issue 34, Condrey "let me out one night at my house and I didn't see him again for a year. Nothing. I called his house. Not only us, but Dusty (Rhodes) and Crockett gave him a couple of chances like, 'Call him again today. If you can get him to come back, it will save your job.' We were making good money. He never called us back until a year or so later."

With the Fabs history, and Condrey gone, Lane received a phone call from Dusty Rhodes, Crockett's booker. Rhodes wanted Lane to come to Charlotte for an interview to join Eaton and Cornette as the Midnight Express.

Lane described the team in Issue 19 as a "marriage made in heaven." It was; made in wrestling heaven. Condrey was a solid worker, but in a tag setting Lane was not only Condrey's equal, but flashier. He added a mountain of charisma, and his wrestling style better complimented Eaton's aerial game.

The Midnight Express was reborn, better than ever.

The team lasted about three years in WCW between 1987 and 1990, a period that featured many dynamic wrestling highs. We were both huge wrestling fans before then, but that was a magical time in the business' history, and no team better represents that time to us than the Midnight Express. Their blind tags and inventive double team maneuvers were represented tag-team wrestling at its apex. Who could forget the vegomatic, the flapjack, or divorce court (a move that didn't just separate the arm from the rest of a wrestler's body, it divorced it)? Cornette's monologues were classics, Eaton's high flying and transitional work brilliant, and Lane's moves and charisma were as smooth as the Gangster of Love himself. The trio was a one, two, three punch without peer.

Only weeks after forming, the new Express captured the NWA U.S. tag team titles on May 16, 1987, in the finals of a six-team tournament beating Ron Garvin and Barry Windham. They would hold those once-prestigious belts two more times, along the

way having classic matches with the Rock and Roll Express, The Southern Boys, and the Fantastics. The Clash of the Champions match from March 27, 1988 against the Fantastics was a match of the year caliber event, taking a backseat only to a Ric Flair vs. Sting 45 minute Broadway.

They also captured the NWA world tag titles on September 10, 1988, from Arn Anderson and Tully Blanchard, who were on their way out of the territory. The Express were on top of the world. Unfortunately, politics played a big factor in the team's demise. Their world title reign didn't last too long as Rhodes had them lay down for the Road Warriors, before they entered into a memorable feud with Original Midnight Express team of Condrey and Randy Rose.

That series was kicked off by one of the greatest angles of the year, as the Lane, Eaton and Cornette were attacked by Condrey, Rose and a young punk manager making his WCW named Paul E. Dangerously. The Express vs. Express series was memorable, but also demonstrated the superiority the Lane/Eaton duo. The feud ended when Condrey pulled a Condrey ditching the promotion without notice, this time leaving WCW in need of a replacement for the Chi-Town Rumble pay-per-view. With Jack Victory subbing for Condrey that night, the Express/Express feud never had a proper blowoff.

WCW's booker George Scott, and it's President, Jim Herd, however, were not Midnight Express fans and the Express quit the territory for a short time. But when Scott departed, the Express returned and went on to do what they do best: have incredible matches with a variety of opponents, be it high caliber teams like the Rock 'n Roll Express, and the Southern Boys, or lesser caliber workers like the Michael Hayes Jimmy Garvin incarnation of the Freebirds.

They also produced great drama. Anyone who saw the angle between the Midnight Express and the Dynamic Dudes team of Johnny Ace and Shane Douglas witnessed Cornette's brilliance. The Dudes were a pretty-boy tag team hated by many long time fans. Yet, the angle with the Express somehow got them

over. The turn by Cornette in November 1989 against the Dudes was a moment in wrestling history that should be shown over and over again to the "writers" at World Wrestling Entertainment so they understand what compelling wrestling television is all about

Politically, the team was still in jeopardy, as was one of their favorite foils, the Rock and Roll Express. For whatever reason, WCW management failed to see the value of the two teams. So, with their jobs on the line, it seemed, the two teams went into the *WrestleWar* pay per view on February 25, 1990, and stole the show by putting up a match of the year candidate.

As great as the *WrestleWar* match was, however, 1990's actual match of the year was a showdown between the Midnight Express and the Southern Boys at the *Great American Bash* on July 7, 1990. With Cornette at ringside donning Southern Regalia, the two teams tore the house down with a fast paced clinic in pacing and psychology, totally

upstaging Sting's first World Title win over Ric Flair

Like all good things, the team essentially came to an end in 1990 when Cornette and Lane walked out on the company because of ongoing company problems and the failure of the promoters to book them properly. "We felt that we were being held back so much. We had all these ideas and all this talent that was just being wasted," Lane told us in Issue 20. "We felt we had too much pride in our work and our ability. We were just being shackled and held back that we just finally rebelled and said, 'Hey, that's it. See ya!'"

Eaton, who had a family to support, stayed behind, and after an initial push, was buried and phased down, left to do jobs to Erik Watts, though he would enjoy periodic singles and tag-team success over the decade. The team sort of reformed a short time later when Lane and Cornette returned with Tom Pritchard as the Heavenly Bodies as part of a Smoky Mountain Wrestling invasion of World

Championship Wrestling. Eaton was by their side, but was injured and thus the Midnight Express never worked a match during that angle

Anyone who saw Eaton and Lane work together with Cornette (either at ringside or at the announcers' table), understands why we are bestowing this honor on these three men. They had an unbelievable ability to excite a crowd, get heat, have amazing matches with a variety of opponents, and make you fall on the floor laughing during an interview

For being among the very best teams of all time, we bestow upon Bobby Eaton, Stan Lane, and Jim Cornette this year's Editors Award for Lifetime Achievement

They join Arn Anderson (1998), the late Gordon Solie (1999), Ted DiBiase (2000), Dusty Rhodes (2001), the Fabulous Freebirds (2002), and Tommy Young (2003)

Congratulations to Bobby, Stan, and Jim!

In 2004, WP editors Paul MacArthur and David Skolnick presented the MX with their annual Lifetime Achievement Award.

AFTER MIDNIGHT

DENNIS CONDREY

After leaving the MX-OME angle and WCW in February, 1989, Dennis returned to Colorado to begin setting up his boarding stable business. He returned to wrestling for a several month run in the old Pensacola/Alabama territory, where he worked as the top single heel, but only flew in and out for the weekend shows. After this run, which contained some of his career best promo work, he returned to his stables full time and left pro wrestling.

Dennis had purchased High Mountain Corral in Golden, Colorado in 1989, and has operated it for the past 19 years. It is a full-service boarding stable with grooming, exercising, training, everything a horse owner needs. As Dennis has said in recent years when discussing pro wrestling, "Thank God for horses!" In early 2009, Dennis is running the stable by phone and trips to Colorado as he finishes his long-planned move to Alabama by building a mountain cabin near the Tennessee border.

Condrey did return to wrestling for a brief time in the 90's, when, as a sideline, he opened a school and trained some local students. As time progressed, he used the students to run spot shows, and he would wrestle Dick Murdoch, who also lived in the area. He

gave it up after a few years, more for lack of time than anything, but the Condrey-Murdoch spot show matches had to have been entertaining, to say the least.

Ironically, Dennis ended up being the catalyst for the eventual reunion of the Express, but not for almost 15 years after their last match.

BOBBY EATON

As mentioned earlier, Bobby ended up being WCW's longest-tenured contract wrestler, staying with the company until 1999. He held the WCW World TV Title in 1991, defeating Arn Anderson, then losing it to Steve Austin. In 1992, Bobby and Arn teamed to win the WCW World Tag Team Title from Ricky Steamboat and Dustin Rhodes, and they held the belts almost 4 months before losing to Rick and Scott Steiner.

In late 1992, Bill Watts, who had gotten the job running WCW, made a talent deal with Jim Cornette in Smoky Mountain Wrestling. The Heavenly Bodies (Stan Lane and Tom Pritchard), the Rock & Roll Express, Bullet Bob Armstrong and Cornette himself would come to WCW TV to set up an "outsider" match on the February 1993 Superbrawl PPV. In the deal, Bobby went to SMW for 90 days to join

the Bodies as a third man, forming a hybrid Midnight Bodies team, and Arn Anderson made SMW dates as well. The Superbrawl PPV, held live in Asheville, N.C., saw Lane and Prichard tear the house down in a tag match with the Rock & Roll, but lose when Bobby's interference backfired. Days earlier, Watts had gone home to Tulsa after disputes with management, so this marked the end of the talent trade, and Bobby, Stan and JC would not work together again for 11 years.

Bobby formed a team in the mid-90's with Lord Steven (William) Regal, known as the Blue Bloods. Regal dubbed Bobby "Earl Robert Eaton", and the two made a great tag team combination, which Bobby enjoyed second only to the Express years.

After leaving WCW, Bobby served as a trainer for the WWF's developmental programs in both Memphis and Louisville, where he got to work with JC again in Ohio Valley Wrestling. Most young, aspiring wrestlers of the past 10 years have grown up admiring Eaton and are honored to train with him.

The last few years of Express reunions and his singles bookings on the independent circuit, where he often faces Ricky Morton, have kept Bobby quite busy, and in the past year he has been helping train his son, Dylan, who made his pro debut in 2008.

STAN LANE

Stan, after leaving WCW in 1990, took some time off before rejoining JC in 1992 as a Heavenly Body in SMW. He was partnered with the man who might have gotten his spot in the Express, Tom Prichard, and they formed a top heel team in their own right, being multiple-time SMW Tag Champions. But Stan's passion for wrestling had waned, and after a 1993 tour of Japan, he decided to retire. His spot in the Bodies was filled by Florida wrestler Jimmy Backlund, named Jimmy Del Ray by Cornette as an homage to Stan's babyface days, when he was announced as from "Del Ray Beach, Florida."

In 1994, Stan got a call from Jerry Jarrett. Jarrett had been hired by Vince to run the wrestling end of the company if he did, indeed, go to prison in the steroid trial. Jerry wanted Stan to come to Stamford as a color announcer for the TV shows, and Stan agreed. He stayed two years, but when Vince got acquitted and Jarrett went home, Stan fell victim to the "anti-Southern sentiment", and was no longer featured on the main broadcasts. "I stuck it out to learn

broadcasting", he says, "and went home in February 1996."

In the summer of that year, he was attending a powerboat race when he met executives of Superboat International, the producers of offshore powerboat racing television programming. He impressed the company with his enthusiasm and knowledge of the sport, and landed a job as an announcer on the TV races. Starting as color man, Stan progressed to the solo announcer spot in 2004, and was made producer of the show as well in 2007. The races, which have aired on networks like ESPN 2, Speed Channel, and OLN, moved to Fox Sports Net with the 2008 season. Sunny locales, fast boats and beautiful women are certainly a perfect fit for Stan's unique talents, although the last holdout of the MX finally became a happily married man a few years ago.

JIM CORNETTE

As soon as he left WCW, JC began plans to open up Smoky Mountain Wrestling, based in Knoxville, as a new territory with several TV markets and a regular event schedule. Working with ex-Crockett front office man and wrestling legend Sandy Scott, with financial backing from record producer Rick Rubin, SMW shot its first TV's in late 1991 and began airing them and running a live schedule of house shows in February 1992.

SMW was a rollercoaster for 4 years, with the shows critically acclaimed, the TV ratings high and major events in Knoxville drawing over 4,000 fans, but the gates were never steady in the "wrestling recession" of the '90's, and the rising cost of producing and airing television on broadcast stations at the time spelled the end as the promotion closed in December 1995.

In July, 1993, shortly after the Superbrawl event, JC had made a talent agreement between SMW and Vince McMahon, and many of the superstars of late '90's WWF started in SMW--The Bodies, Kane, Chris Candido, Sunny, Al Snow, and others entered the WWF through SMW. While booking and working as the heel manager for SMW, JC made WWF PPV's and TV tapings as a manager for, among others, WWF Champion Yokozuna, Tag Champs Owen Hart and the British Bulldog, Vader, and even former UFC Champion Dan Severn.

In 1996, after SMW closed, JC moved to Stamford fulltime as a member of the creative team.

and for the next three years also worked in talent relations, as a TV announcer often teaming with Jim Ross, and as a match producer.

Never a fan of living in the Northeast, Cornette took the opportunity to move home to Louisville in July 1999, by making a deal with Jim Ross to set up the WWF's fledgling developmental program at Danny Davis' Ohio Valley Wrestling school. Cornette became partners in the company, handling the booking and TV announcing, with Davis heading production, business and school operations, and over the next six years it became the most successful developmental program in WWE history.

OVW enjoyed great success as a highly-rated local TV show, an arena promoter of major events at the Louisville Gardens, and as Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom's biggest-drawing entertainment series. The training program produced current WWE (after the name change to World Wrestling Entertainment) superstars like John Cena, Randy Orton and Batista, TNA superstar Matt Morgan, UFC Heavyweight Champion and former WWE Champ Brock Lesnar, and over 75 other names on the major fed's rosters since 1999.

In July 2005, problems between JC and the WWE office that had been bubbling since Jim Ross left the position of WWE talent relations VP, finally

bubbled over. The issues, basically stemming from how much control WWE had over OVW's business, ended with JC and WWE parting company. WWF released him from his consultant's contract, and JC, burned out on wrestling, stepped away from OVW as well, although he retained his ownership interest until selling to Danny Davis in 2007.

"I had been consumed with wrestling for 23 years as of 2005," JC says, "So all I did for a year was stuff for fun, like MX reunions and Ring of Honor events to work with heroes of mine like Bobby Heenan or J.J. Dillon. It helped bring the fun back to the business."

In June, 2006, TNA Wrestling asked JC to come in as the public face of TNA management, announcing matches, making rulings and giving stipulations, which he is a good fit at as he's been doing it for a quarter of a century. He also serves as a behind the-scenes producer working with the younger talent.

"Thirty years ago", he laughs, "I was working for Christine Jarrett, now I work for her grandson, Jeff. That's actually really cool."

Back in Summer 2004, with all 4 members of the Express scattered in different directions and professions, few would have suspected they were about to be back in demand as a group.



Reunited

With all of the members of the Midnight Express following different paths, it took another type of reunion to bring them back together. In 2004, Dennis Condrey returned to Alabama from Colorado for a family reunion. Homesick after all those years away and with the stable doing well, he decided to move back to Alabama for good. Shortly afterward, he ran into Bullet Bob Armstrong, who asked him to make a special appearance at a wrestling card in the area. After being seen by that many folks in the wrestling business after such a long time, his phone began ringing off the hook, and many calls were from promoters interested in a Midnight Express reunion.

JC recalls, "As soon as I heard Dennis was back and got his number, we started talking again like it had only been a week, not 15 years." The first reunion of Eaton, Condrey and Cornette as the Midnight Express took place on September 25, 2004 at the historic Civic Auditorium in Kingsport, Tennessee for promoter Jeff Tankersly. There was a full house on hand, and the MX fell right into their old teamwork, with liberal use of their trademarked comedy spots taking the place of the bumps and blood of 20 years before, but both the teams and the fans had a good time.

The next week, October 2, 2004, the first full MX reunion was held as a day-long event in Philadelphia by the Ring of Honor promotion, with Stan Lane rejoining the group. There was an interview video shoot in the morning, an afternoon Q&A attended by around 250 fans, then an outstanding ROH card that night, drawing a then-record crowd for the promotion in the National Guard Armory. As a feature of the event, all 4 members of the Express were together in the ring for the first time in 15 years, and thanked the Philly fans for being their "hometown" crowd in the '80's, when the city was the first to start cheering them as heels.

The ceremony was interrupted by a surprise appearance by Ricky Morton, accompanied by ROH faction The Embassy with manager Prince Nana. Morton claimed the wrong team was being honored, and the Rock & Roll were the greatest Express of all, giving the fans the opportunity to see for the first time ever the Midnight being cheered against the Rock & Roll.

It ended up in a ring-clearing brawl, with the

MX routing the Embassy and finishing them off by Lane and Condrey both rocket-launching Eaton from the top rope onto their fallen foes. By this time, Condrey and Eaton were receiving so many requests for dates from promoters for independent shows and legends events, that Dennis put his move to Alabama on hold and rented a home in the Carolinas, more centrally located to the bookings.

The MX began a program with the Rock & Roll in Lenoir, N.C. for promoter Tony Hunter in November 2004, and 5 monthly events drew near or complete sellouts at the Lenoir Rec Center until March 2005. The two teams worked some of their old angles with bloody finishes, and the Carolinas fans loved it. A sellout of over 1,500 packed the place on January 8, 2005 when JC appeared to manage the MX vs. the R&R in a cage match, which the MX won with help from the racket. Bobby and Dennis wrestled most weekends of 2005 for promoters all over the Southeast.

Another unique matchup was held in Tampa on January 29th that year for promoter Sal Corrente's WrestleReunion. In addition to the weekend-long fanfest with autograph and photo sessions, Q&A's, activities and the like, a wrestling card was held and for the first time ever, all members of the Express took on the Rock & Roll and Bobby Fulton & Tommy Rogers, the Fantastics. The faces triumphed, everybody had fun, and JC decided to make that his last appearance as a wrestler before he killed himself, and sold his tights to a fan.

The first MX reunion in Charlotte was at Greg Price's annual Mid-Atlantic Legends fanfest August 19 & 20, 2005. All 4 had more fun joking with the fans (and each other) at the autograph sessions than anything else. The wrestling event featured another MX-R&R match, but this time refereed by alltime legend Tommy Young.

JC recalls "We worked with a lot of great referees, like Earl Hebner, Ron West, and Nick Patrick, but Tommy Young was classic. Tommy made a match with his facials and body language, and as I knew him to be the Felix Unger of pro wrestling, he cracked me up when we did the referee boxing spot. Tommy was also Flair's ref of choice for years, and it was great to do a match with him again."

The next weekend, August 26 & 27th, all 4

MX appeared at Sal Corrente's WrestleReunion event in Valley Forge, Pa. The Express had the honor of being booked against Dory & Terry Funk, two all-time legends, and Mick Foley, a longtime friend and one of the biggest stars in the business, managed by JC's idol Bobby Heenan. But there was a big argument about the finish.

"Sal wanted the babyfaces to lose!" JC laughs. Three legends, and the biggest star on the show, on a legends night, with no return match to promote EVER, and he wanted them to lose! Instead of making them happy, he wanted to suck all the air out of the fans. The Midnight specialized in getting beat and staying over, but he wouldn't hear it."

"We sat down with Dory, Terry and Mick, and told them we didn't want to win. The Funks both started offering to lose, and Mick didn't care about which team won, but he refused to beat anybody. With nobody wanting to win the match, I got to have a dream come true. In the finish, both the Funk Brothers put simultaneous spinning toeholds on me, while Mick held me in Mr. Socko, then Terry pulled my pants off just as he had done to me on live Memphis TV in 1983, and the fans went nuts. Then Terry got whacked with the racket and pinned, and the crowd went mild. It may have been the only time in wrestling history that the argument about the finish was everybody wanting to lose."

On November 19, 2005, in Spartanburg, S.C., promoter Tony Hunter presented a Starrcade Tribute event at the old Memorial Auditorium. The Q&A with the MX and Terry Funk made national TV, including the Jimmy Kimmel show, when fan David Wills of Georgia became emotional and cried, saying, "It's still real to me, Damn it!"

The wrestling card was headlined by Dusty Rhodes vs. Tully Blanchard, with Terry Funk, J.J. Dillon, Magnum TA and other NWA legends in the heart of Crockett country, including a six-man tag match with Eaton, Condrey and Cornette against Jerry Lawler, Ricky Morton and Brad Armstrong. The event drew a sellout 2,000 fans paying over \$40,000.

JC recalls, "Ricky couldn't make it, so we had a handicap match, and for the finish Jeff Hardy hit the ring and pinned me. I had come out of my glorious retirement because I couldn't pass up working with guys of that calibre in front of a crowd like that one more time. It was a great match, the best match that I was ever going to have again as a wrestler, so I retired permanently."

www.jimcornette.com

Sal Corrente's first (and, as it turned out, last) venture into a wrestling legends show on PPV was taped on March 5, 2006 at Universal Studio's Hard Rock Cafe in Orlando. Eaton, Lane and Condrey, with JC ringside, took on Scott, Brad and Bullet Bob Armstrong, managed by Bobby Heenan. The event was broadcast several weeks later to a tiny but appreciative audience, due in large part to a lack of any knowledge by the general public that it was happening.

JC also got to do color commentary alongside Lance Russell for the first time, and Stan intended for this to be his last in-ring appearance with the Express, although he still does fanfest appearances and the like when boat racing is off-season. In August 2007, the Charlotte fanfest saw possibly the last Condrey and Eaton-Rock & Roll match in Charlotte, with the MX finally defeating Ricky and Robert 23 years and 6 months after they started trying.

On June 7, 2008, the MX-R&R match main evented the NWA show at the Phillips Arena in Atlanta before about 4,000 fans, over 22 years after it had first done so at the old Omni in 1986. Additionally, JC got to induct the Express into the NWA Hall of Fame during the mid-card ceremony. "It was a great experience to have the match one more time in Atlanta in a venue like that", JC says, "but every time I fall down now, it's harder to get back up."

In December 2008, Stan returned to the ring for two special events in Greensboro and Charlotte, teaming with Bobby once more to face Morton and Gibson, mostly because his wife had never seen the match. These events came a full 25 years after the debut of the Expresses in Mid-South Wrestling.

At the 25th anniversary, all realize that sooner or later, the last Midnight Express match will come. "That's why we've enjoyed these reunions so much", JC explained. "We've had matches we've never had before, or had them one more time, or worked with people we'd never gotten to work with. At this point, after 25 years, that's the most important thing."

"Fans still want to see the matches, and promoters still want to book the matches, but at this point it gets increasingly harder to HAVE the matches. Still, for what we have been able to accomplish in the sport for a quarter of a century, we're thankful. We're not quite ready to say that the next match is the very last, but when you see it advertised, get your tickets early, because even we aren't sure exactly which one will be the farewell. And we wouldn't have it any other way."



MID-SOUTH TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

- 3/13/84 Lafayette, La.-----Midnight Express defeated Mr. Wrestling 2 & Magnum TA
4/25/84 Shreveport, La.-----Midnight Express lost to Rock & Roll Express
Time as champions 1 month, 12 days
- 5/23/84 Shreveport, La.-----Midnight Express defeated Rock & Roll Express
10/1/84 New Orleans, La. -Midnight Express lost to Rock & Roll Express
Time as champions 4 months, 8 days

WORLD CLASS WRESTLING AMERICAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

- 1/11/85 Dallas, Tx.-----Midnight Express defeated the Fantastics
3/8/85 Dallas, Tx.-----Midnight vs. Fantastics TITLES HELD UP
Time as champions 1 months, 25 days
- 5/5/85 Dallas, TX.-----Midnight Express lost to Fantastics in rematch for held up title

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

- 2/2/86 Atlanta, Ga.-----Midnight Express defeated Rock & Roll Express
8/16/86 Philadelphia, Pa.-----Midnight Express lost to Rock & Roll Express
Time as champions 6 months 14 days.
- 9/10/88 Philadelphia, Pa.-----Midnight Express defeated Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson
10/29/88 New Orleans, La.---Midnight Express lost to Road Warriors
Time as champions 1 month, 19 days

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE UNITED STATES TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

- 5/16/87 Atlanta, Ga.-----Midnight Express defeated Ron Garvin & Barry Windham
4/26/88 Chattanooga, Tn.-----Midnight Express lost to the Fantastics
Time as champions 11 months, 10 days
- 7/10/88 Baltimore, Md.-----Midnight Express defeated the Fantastics
9/10/88 -----Midnight Express vacate USTTC upon winning NWA World Tag Team Title
Time as champions 2 months
- 5/19/90 Washington, D.C.-----Midnight Express defeated Brian Pillman & Z Man
8/24/90 East Rutherford, N.J.-Midnight Express lost to Rick & Scott Steiner
Time as champions 3 months, 5 days

NOTE: The Midnight Express are the only team in NWA history to hold the NWA World and United States Tag Titles at the same time. Additionally, their 3 reigns as U.S. Tag Champions are the most reigns for any team in that title's history, and their 11 month 10 day tenure in reign number one is the longest uninterrupted reign in the title's history as well. Their total time as champions over the three reigns of 16 months, 15 days is yet another record.

Magazine & Newsletter AWARDS

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED:

The oldest continually published newstand pro wrestling magazine in the United States and Canada, PWI has given out year-end awards for the past 30 years, and for much of that time has been the largest-selling wrestling magazine in North America.

1985 MANAGER OF THE YEAR----JIM CORNETTE

1987 TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR----MIDNIGHT EXPRESS (EATON & LANE)

WRESTLING OBSERVER NEWSLETTER:

The Wrestling Observer Newsletter is the oldest, most widely read "insider" newsletter in the sport. In the pre-internet days, it was the primary publication for both those in the business and the "hard-core" wrestling fans ("hardcore" in those days meaning dedicated and knowledgeable) to keep up with the happenings in the entire industry. At year's end, editor Dave Meltzer would hold balloting for awards voted on by the thousands of readers in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Japan, who due to video tape trading and their readership of the WON, were the only ones able to see and keep up with all professional wrestling worldwide. Thus, these awards could be looked upon as the most "legitimate" in the sport, as they were based on a true balloting by the most informed fans.

1984

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express 6th place
FEUD OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express vs. Rock & Roll Express 6th place
MANAGER OF THE YEAR-----Jim Cornette 3rd place
BEST INTERVIEW-----Jim Cornette 7th place

1985

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express 2nd place
MANAGER OF THE YEAR-----Jim Cornette 1st place
BEST INTERVIEW-----Jim Cornette 1st place
BEST FLIER (Aerial moves)-----Bobby Eaton 4th place

1986

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express 1st place
FEUD OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express vs. Rock & Roll Express 2nd place
MANAGER OF THE YEAR-----Jim Cornette 1st place
MATCH OF THE YEAR-----Midnight vs. Rock & Roll 8/16/86 Philadelphia 4th place
BEST INTERVIEW-----Jim Cornette 1st place
BEST OUTSTANDING WRESTLER-Bobby Eaton 5th place
BEST FLIER-----Bobby Eaton 2nd place

1987

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express (Eaton & Lane) 1st place
MANAGER OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express (Eaton & Condrey) 4th place
BEST INTERVIEW-----Jim Cornette 1st place
BEST FLIER-----Bobby Eaton 2nd place



1988

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express 1st place
FEUD OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express vs. Fantastics 1st place
Midnight Express vs. Tully & Arn 7th place
Midnight Express vs. Original Midnight 8th place
MATCH OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express vs. Fantastics 3/27/88 Greensboro 2nd place
Midnight Express vs. Fantastics 4/26/88 Chattanooga 3rd place
Midnight Express vs. Tully & Arn 8/26/88 Greensboro 10th place
MANAGER OF THE YEAR-----Jim Cornette 1st place
BEST INTERVIEW-----Jim Cornette 1st place
BEST FLIER-----Bobby Eaton 3rd place
BEST COLOR COMMENTATOR-----Jim Cornette 3rd place

1989

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express 6th place
MANAGER OF THE YEAR-----Jim Cornette 1st place
BEST INTERVIEW-----Jim Cornette 2nd place
BEST COLOR COMMENTATOR-----Jim Cornette 2nd place
BEST FLIER-----Bobby Eaton 8th place

1990

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express 2nd place
MATCH OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express vs. Southern Boys 7/8/90 Baltimore 3rd place
MANAGER OF THE YEAR-----Jim Cornette 1st place
BEST INTERVIEW-----Jim Cornette 3rd place
BEST COLOR COMMENTATOR-----Jim Cornette 3rd place
MOST OUTSTANDING WRESTLER--Bobby Eaton 3rd place
BEST TECHNICAL WRESTLER-----Bobby Eaton 3rd place
BEST FLIER-----Bobby Eaton 3rd place

Additionally, in the 1989 Wrestling Observer Annual Decade In Review, the Midnight Express placed three matches on the list of the hundred greatest matches of the '80's worldwide, which were Midnight vs. Rock & Roll 4/12 86 Charlotte, Midnight vs. Fantastics 3/27/88 Greensboro, and Midnight vs. Fantastics 4 26 88 Chattanooga. As well, Bobby Eaton made the list of "Top 20 In-Ring Wrestlers of the '80's", which was not ranked in a particular numerical order. In 1990, the Midnight Express had 5 matches placed on editor Dave Meltzer's list of the 65 best worldwide matches of the year. Additionally, on the WON editorial board's list of the 75 best wrestlers in the industry worldwide of 1990, Bobby Eaton placed third, topped only by Nature Boy Ric Flair and Japan's Jushin "Thunder" Liger.

MATWATCH:

In the late 80's and early 90's, television newscaster and programming executive Steve Beverly published Matwatch, a newsletter devoted to the broadcast, cable and Pay Per View side of pro wrestling. It was considered second only to the Observer in credibility and reach, and conducted similar year-end awards voting by it's readers on television-oriented performances.

1988

BROADCAST TV MATCH OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express v. Fantastics 4/26/88 Chattanooga 1st place
CABLE/PPV MATCH OF THE YEAR-----Midnight Express v. Fantastics 3/27/88 Greensboro 2nd place
BEST TV ANGLE-----Original Midnight attack MX on TBS 11 2 88 1st place
MEMORABLE TV MOMENT OF THE YEAR--Original Midnight attack MX 3rd place
BEST TV BRAWL-----Midnight vs. Fantastics 3/27 88 1st place
BEST OVERALL TV PERSONALITY-----Jim Cornette 1st place

1989

BEST COLOR COMMENTATOR-----Jim Cornette 2nd place
 OUTSTANDING TV PERSONALITY-----Jim Cornette 2nd place
 BEST TV TURN-----Midnight & JC on Dynamic Dudes 11/15/89 Troy, N.Y.

1990

BEST PPV MATCH-----Midnight Express vs. Southern Boys 7/8/90 1st place
 Midnight Express vs. Rock & Roll 2/25/90 6th place
 BEST BROADCAST/CABLE MATCH-----Midnight vs. Southern Boys--synd --NWA Worldwide 1st place
 Midnight vs. Steiners--cable--WCW Saturday night 4th place
 BEST COLOR COMMENTATOR-----Jim Cornette 3rd place
 BEST TV PERSONALITY-----Jim Cornette 3rd place



The Battle Of Beckley

by Jim Cornette



On May 29, 1987, the Midnight Express were booked against the Rock & Roll Express as the main event of a card at the Raleigh County Armory in Beckley, West Virginia. A sellout crowd of 4,000 paying \$26,200 packed the arena, and they were a rowdy bunch indeed. We were used to getting a lot of heat in our matches with the R&R, but this crowd was really percolating, and at one point after I whacked Ricky Morton with the racket, a fan jumped the rail to get me and security had to carry him out by the arms and legs.

We decided to get out of there, and the R&R quickly got the pinfall. When they left the ring, security, which were local rent-a-cops and not real police, all surrounded them and took them back to the locker rooms, leaving us alone in the ring to fend for ourselves against the crowd. We knew we couldn't leave the ring, so we stood there being pelted with garbage while we tried to figure out how we were going to get out of there. People were crowding the railings, when Stan looked sideways and saw a guy launching a three foot wooden aisle marker toward the ring like a spear.

He yelled, "Look out!", and I turned to see it just as the guy let go of it, and I ducked--but Bobby was still in mid-turn, and it got him right in the side of the neck, scraping all the skin off him all the way down to his left shoulder, like a "road rash" you get in a motorcycle wreck. With no security, the guy turned to leave and nobody was going to stop him, so Stan, like a shot, dove to the floor, hopped the rail, spun the guy around and nailed him with a straight right to the face that sent him sprawling.

Immediately, Stan realized he was in the middle of the fans wearing nothing but wrestling trunks, and jumped back inside the rail as Bobby and I got out to meet him. Security showed back up and hustled us back to the locker room, we called for the EMT's to check Bobby's injury, and Sandy Scott, the event coordinator, reminded us that we better press charges on the guy to help avoid a lawsuit since Stan had punched him. So the security went to get the guy so we could identify him and take out a warrant. He was brought back, Stan ID'd him, and of course as hot as I was I cussed him out for about 20 seconds before they

led him off. We had no idea how big a deal this was going to be, especially since being attacked by fans and even fighting back at live events was not at all unusual for the Express. But this was West Virginia, and as the joke goes, "You are now entering West Virginia, set your watches back 50 years."

I had actually broken one of their blue laws by cussing the guy out, the guy smelled money, and hired a "big city" lawyer from over in Charleston to sue everybody in sight. None of the witnesses could agree on anything except they were in the same city that night, and it turned into a legal boondoggle that lasted almost 5 years, cost thousands in legal fees, and ended up being a landmark case that has been immortalized in West Virginia law school textbooks.

Jim Crockett Promotions paid our initial legal fees in dealing with the suit, but after they went out of business in 1988, it cost us each into five figures to defend. By the time the case had been thrown out, appealed, reinstated, and settled by Crockett's insurance company in 1991, the guy got over \$600,000 for taking one punch, and while Stan hit him with a hell of a shot, no one has ever mistaken him for Mike Tyson. He got off scot free for harpooning Bobby, and our whole involvement left us with quite the bit of disdain for the "justice system". Court documents and depositions in the case are summarized below:

A suit was filed over the incident by the fan, Roy Massey, and his wife Ruby, against the Midnight Express, Stan Lane, Bobby Eaton and Jim Cornette, as well as Jim Crockett Promotions and Freedom Security, stating that Stan Lane "did willfully, wantonly and maliciously assault and beat the plaintiff Roy Massey about the head, face and other portions of his body" and as a result Massey sustained "serious and permanent injuries", "including but not limited to":

- a. Fracture of the orbit of his left eye and other facial bones
- b. Severe cervical strain and sprain
- c. Multiple abrasions and contusions
- d. Facial nerve damage and palsy
- e. Nerve damage to the left eye and attendant damage to it's visual functioning
- f. Damage to the vertebral column and it's attendant nerve and muscular support system
- g. Scarring and disfigurement
- h. And was otherwise damaged

As a result, the suit stated, the plaintiff had suf-

fered, and would continue to suffer

- a. Great pain and suffering in and about the aforesaid injured portions of his body
- b. Great mental anguish and anxiety
- c. Permanent impairment in his ability to lead a natural and productive life
- d. Great humiliation and embarrassment
- e. Medical, hospital and drug expenses in addition to those already incurred (\$6500) And, as well, as a result of the incident, the plaintiff's wife Ruby "has, and will be likewise in the future be deprived of the care, society and consortium of her spouse"

WHAT A FREAKIN' PUNCH!!!

Additionally, my promo on Massey caused all 3 members of the Express to be sued for 'willfully, wantonly and maliciously defaming and insulting the plaintiff with vile, vituperative and insulting language including:

- "You mother fucker"
- "You alcoholic son of a bitch"
- "You're the scum of the earth"

This caused Massey to be subjected to "great emotional and physical stress, public humiliation, ridicule, embarrassment, scorn, mental anguish and anxiety". The complaint also sought damages against the Express for having the arrest warrant filed against Massey for "falsely and maliciously" charging him with the assault for throwing the aisle marker, and Freedom Security was sued for "failing to protect the spectators from unprovoked attacks" (when in actual fact the security was supposed to protect the WRESTLERS from the FANS).

Monetary damages sought by this poor, put-upon soul for being punched once and cussed for 20 seconds were \$4,800,000 for Massey and \$250,000 for his wife from the Express and Crockett Promotions, and \$1,000,000 for Massey and \$250,000 for his wife from Freedom Security, or a total of \$6,300,000. For that kind of money, most folks wouldn't mind being drawn and quartered.

Over the next several months, depositions were taken in the case that provided a fascinating look inside the "justice system", the inability of anyone to agree on anything, and life in general in sunny West Virginia.

Witness Karen Smith testified that during the match, Massey was pacing back and forth and reach-

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ABRAMS, BYRON, HENDERSON & RICHMOND

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

POST OFFICE DRAWER #

DECKLEY, WEST VIRGINIA 26002-0000

A. DAVID ABRAMS, JR.
C. ELTON BYRON, JR.
JAMES M. HENDERSON, II
WILLIAM F. RICHMOND, JR.

January 2, 1991

Mr. Stan Lane
10000 Fairway Ridge
Charlotte, NC 28226

Mr. Bobby Lee Eaton
8506 Carmel Road Extension
Charlotte, NC 28226

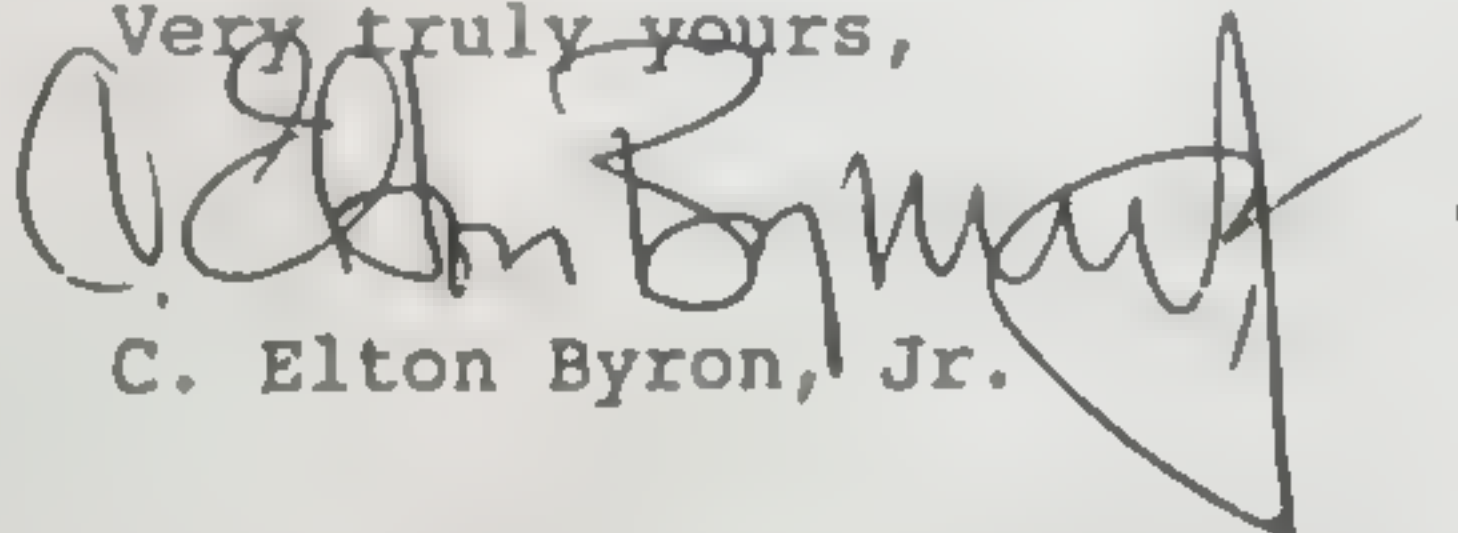
Mr. Jim Cornette
11129 Meadowcrest Lane
Charlotte, NC 28226

Re: Roy and Ruby Massey vs.
The Midnight Express, et als

Gentlemen:

This will advise that the Supreme Court of West Virginia rendered an opinion on December 18, 1990, that the summary judgment dismissing Jim Crockett Promotions and Freedom Security from the above referenced action should be overruled and has reinstated the claim of Roy Massey against Jim Crockett and Freedom Security. Therefore, I imagine we will be moving forward with this case in the very near future. I will keep you advised as to when any hearings or other matters are scheduled.

Very truly yours,



C. Elton Byron, Jr.

Gentlemen:

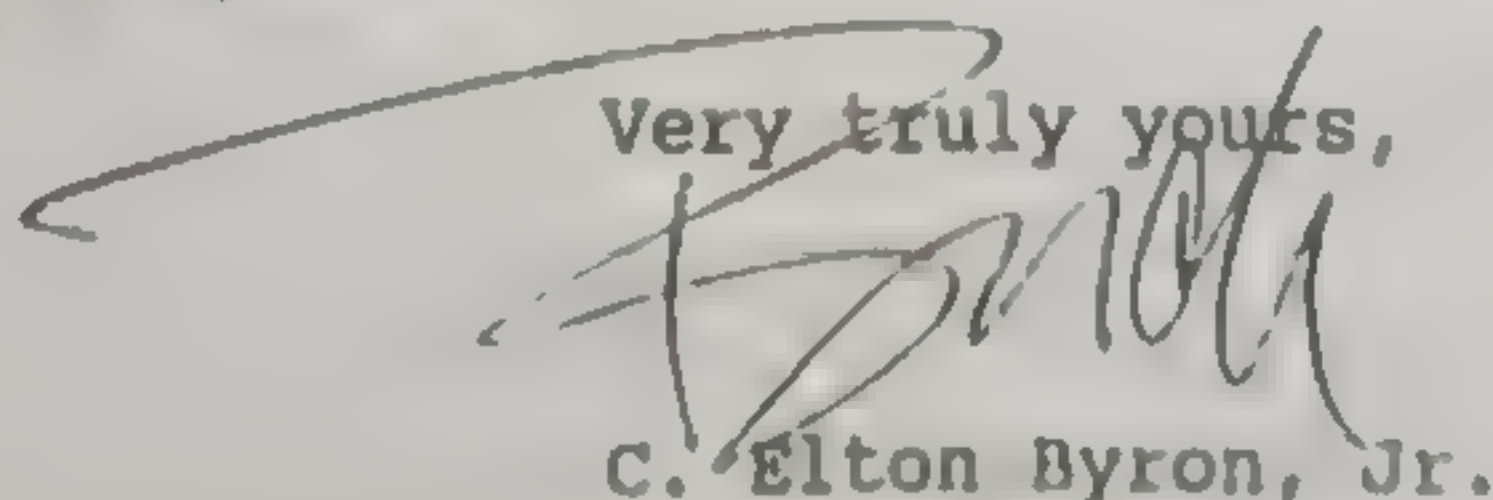
October 21, 1991

Please find enclosed a copy of the attested Order in the above referenced matter which dismisses the case against you with prejudice. This means it can never be reinstated again on the facts and circumstances which were alleged by Mr. Massey. In other words, this matter is over forever.

You will find enclosed a final statement for services rendered in this regard.

Thank you for the opportunity of assisting you in this matter, and if I may be of service to you in the future please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Very truly yours,



C. Elton Byron, Jr.

ing for a chair, and after the match she saw him pick the aisle marker up, but other fans then obscured her view until it landed in the ring. She did see Stan hit Massey, as Massey then fell into her lap when he landed.

Her boyfriend, Enoch Trent, testified he had been watching Massey for several minutes because he seemed so agitated, and called Karen's attention to him as well when he tried to pick up the chair. There was no question in his mind that Massey had thrown the marker, and after the punch when Massey fell on his girlfriend, testified "I wanted to stay away, you know. I wasn't going to go over there and be no hero I figured she was pretty stout and can take care of herself." Trent also testified no security were present at the time.

Carlos Garten, the ring announcer, said he saw an older man throw the aisle marker "like a javelin", bloodying "one of the Express", and that the man Stan hit was "definitely the same man that threw the marker."

Richard Brady, owner of Freedom Security, testified that he had operated the company for 4 years, and also did "private investigations". He said all his employees got "on-the-job-training", as well as occasional "VCR training programs." His own training in the security field consisted of "criminology courses in college" and "different seminars on different subjects." He stated he had assigned 15 guards to work the event, which drew 4,000 people, even though the Armory had only requested 12. He also testified Freedom security had no liability insurance, they had dropped it in 1986 due to the high cost of coverage.

Joseph Clark, the owner of a local Chic-Fil-A, maintained a teenager had thrown the marker and then run off into the crowd. Later, with security around Massey but "no one seeming to be very concerned about how Mr. Massey was", Clark got him an ice pack, and when the Express asked to see Massey, Clark went with him "because he was so unstable and so shaky."

Clark testified Cornette said "That's the old fucker that did it, the dirty son of a bitch", and many more obscenities. Clark had expected the wrestlers to "apologize". Charles Pittman, a friend of one of the ambulance drivers, saw the marker hit Bobby, and then saw Stan hit Massey and "knock him plumb over the chair and flat out." Going to the back with the paramedics, Pittman saw Bobby had "scratches and a mark all the way from his shoulder to his neck".

When Massey was brought in he heard Stan JJ him as the man who had thrown the marker, then heard Cornette say "we'll have you in court, you hill-billy, mother fucking son of a bitch cocksucker, you coal mining son of a bitch, you ought to be put in jail, etc.", and while Pittman said "nobody he talked to" thought Massey had thrown the marker, he conceded when Cornette demanded that Massey be arrested, none of the security or bystanders said Massey didn't do it.

Edward Vaught, a Freedom Security guard, testified he had no formal police or security training whatsoever. He stated he had apprehended an intoxicated fan who jumped over the rail to get at Cornette earlier in the match, and he and three other guards carried him out the back door as the man exclaimed "Nobody is going to stop me from getting to Cornette!" Vaught stated he got a "glance of an individual throwing the marker", started to pursue him, then saw Lane going after Massey, and "grabbed his arm before he hit Mr. Massey, having no effect as far as stopping the punch. It was like I wasn't even on his arm at all." He accompanied Massey back to the backstage confrontation as well, but he claimed he told Cornette Massey didn't do it.

Estimates by all witnesses of what it would have taken to stop Stan Lane ranged from 4 to 6 grown men, with Vaught adding, "and that's hitting him at the knees." Vaught also testified the marker didn't hit anyone except Lane "on the leg". Pittman's friend, ambulance driver Elizabeth Carter, thought "a boy" had thrown the marker, that Lane had "knocked Massey over two rows of chairs", and that in the backstage aftermath Cornette told Massey "If you wasn't so old, I'd beat the hell out of you, you goddamn old cock-sucker", but that was all Cornette said.

She admitted that Massey was the only person that attracted her attention with his behavior to the extent that she watched him during the matches. Most witnesses were confused whether the marker hit Stan or Bobby, with a few saying it hit both. Some said Massey was retreating from throwing the sign, some said he was walking down the aisle, one said he was sitting in his chair and stood up as Stan approached to hit him, one even said Stan hit him twice despite testimony of over a dozen others that there was only one punch. Estimates of Stan's body weight were wide-ranging, up to 260 pounds even though he weighed about 225 that night legitimately.

About half the witnesses said the Midnights

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the match, the other half said the Rock & Roll
Estimates of the number of matches on the card
ranged from 6 to crack security man Vaught's "12 to
14".

Witness David Goddard said that Lane, Eaton
and JC all 3 went after Massey and "one of them"
struck him. Witness Jeffrey Pittman testified it
"looked like two or three of them (kids) threw it" (the
marker). He also was present backstage, and said "I've
heard comedians do a cuss-down, but he (JC) had
them beat...he said, black lung mother fucker, and
stuff like that. It was like 10 seconds and it was
fast...no way I could remember everything."

Roy Massey's deposition was as thick as a
phone book. He was a 62 year old, lifelong resident of
Raleigh County, West Virginia. He had 10 children,
but neither he nor his wife could remember all their
daughters' married names. He was an ex-coal miner
who claimed to have been totally disabled by a mining
accident in 1974, but he didn't retire until 1986, and
he had not been declared disabled by Workmen's
Comp or Social Security as of 1988. He had also
applied for disability for loss of sight in his right eye,
and 4 different injuries to his left hand, 2% each on 3
injuries and 3% on the 4th, as well as 4% disability
for a wrist injury.

He testified the "Section C" aisle marker was right
beside his seat, Section C, row C, seat 22. He saw
"something" thrown into the ring from behind him, he
turned to leave, and that's the last thing he remem-
bered. On further questioning, Massey stated the aisle
marker had been "gone" since intermission, he
watched it go into the ring but it didn't hit anybody,
and while he did see a security guard "holding a boy",
he had let the boy go and run toward Massey right
before he was struck.

Massey said he had stayed in the hospital 8 days,
had surgery to repair the damage, couldn't wear his
dentures anymore because they didn't fit properly, half
his nose was numb, he had constant headaches, blurry
vision, he couldn't sleep, couldn't fish, couldn't paint
cars, couldn't work in his garden, and he was still
wearing a neck brace 7 months after the incident
because his 1st through 7th vertebrae were injured. He
admitted he had moved the aisle marker away from
his seat so kids could get in and out without him "get-
ting up and down." He claimed one of the security
guards had told him he apprehended the kid that threw
the marker, but let him go when Lane came at him.
No guard's testimony corroborated this.

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By October 1988, Massey was alleging further
complications and scheduled for an examination at the
Cleveland Clinic. The suit drag on and on, being dis-
missed, appealed and refiled over several legal points,
a major one being the uninsured status of Freedom
Security. Since Crockett Promotions was the only
named party with insurance (read deep pockets), keep-
ing them in the case was paramount to it's success and
the attorneys collecting any real money, so much of
the legal wrangling centered on that. It was finally set-
tled in October 1991, but is still studied by law stu-
dents in the state as an example of something, I'm just
not sure what.

400 S.E.2d 876

(Cite as: 184 W.Va. 441, 400 S.E.2d 876)

Supreme Court of Appeals of
West Virginia

Roy MASSEY and Ruby Massey

JIM CROCKETT PROMOTIONS, INC., a North
Carolina Corporation, Licensed to do
business in the State of West Virginia; Stan Lane
a k a "Sweet Stan."

Individually; Bobby Lee Eaton, a k a "Beautiful
Bobby," Individually; and Jim
Cornette, Individually; and Stan Lane, Bobby Lee
Eaton, and Jim Cornette, all
doing business as "The Midnight Express,"
Freedom Security & Detective
Agency, Inc., a West Virginia Corporation

No. 19481.

Dec. 18, 1990

A spectator at professional wrestling exhibition was
struck by one of the wrestlers and sued wrestlers and
their manager, promoter and security firm. Motions
of promoter and security firm for summary judgment
were granted by the Circuit Court, Raleigh County.
John Calvin Ashworth, J., and plaintiffs appealed.
The Supreme Court of Appeals held that there were
issues of fact precluding summary judgment as to
whether it was in the course of wrestler's employment
with promoter to provoke and incite spectators at the
exhibition, whether it was foreseeable that there
would be altercation as result of wrestlers and
manager provoking the crowd, and whether there
were sufficient security personnel in the arena to
control the crowd.

Reversed and remanded

*Excerpts from six pages of notes on the
Beckley lawsuit in West Virginia law textbook.*



Disorder in the Court

The Express' legal troubles weren't always the result of violence, or even serious. Sometimes, even if they cost money, they were so silly you almost had to laugh. You've read stories of some of the more violent incidents. Here are a couple of the goofiest.

"It was a fairly common rib in those days," JC laughs, "For a group of the boys to get together, talk to the local cops working the matches, and have one of the guys 'arrested' for some heinous offense. One of the biggest stars in the business was hauled out of the Charlotte Coliseum one night on the charge of statutory rape. Screaming 'I thought she was 18', he was in the back seat of a patrol car sweating like a whore in church, until he looked up and saw all the boys peering in the window at him, laughing like hyenas, and realized it was a rib."

"One night in 1986, we were at the same arena wrestling Dusty Rhodes and Magnum TA. At the Coliseum, they had a 3 foot high metal railing around the ring, and I always had 2 cops squatting down behind me to watch my back, plus the regular security, because we had good heat in Charlotte. I usually paced back and forth and moved my head a lot so that I would make a moving target, but just as I whacked Dusty with the racket, a guy started running down the ringside aisle, literally broad jumped the rail and the cops, and drove a straight right punch at a dead run into the back of my head. If I'd seen it coming, it would have knocked me out, but as it was I saw stars, and before I could react, the cops grabbed him, and he in turn grabbed ME in a bear hug to hold on so they couldn't pull him off."

"I grabbed the guy by the hair with my left hand and started trying to whack him in the head with the butt of the racket, but he wouldn't let go, and now at least 5 or 6 cops were in a tug of war with us."

"Dusty saw what was happening, came through the ropes and dove off the apron in a 300 pound cross body, making it look like he was trying to get back at me while actually trying to save my ass. We all fell like bowling pins, and as I scrambled to my feet, the cops had this guy covered up. I tried to throw a kick at him, because, well, fuck him, he got a helluva shot in on me, but in the chaos I nailed one of the cops in the leg."

"The police drug the guy off to jail, we finished the match, and afterwards in the locker room they told me as they stuffed the jackass in the patrol car, they had taken an 8 inch hunting knife off of him. This was the same arena where Sonny King had been stabbed and almost died in 1979, so it could have been worse."

"I thought no more about it for a few weeks, until one night a group of somber faced cops came into the locker room and told me I was being arrested for the incident, on the charge of assault on a police officer. Panicking and yelling for anyone named Crockett, I was shitting as they pulled out the handcuffs, and as they started to lead me out one of the cops told me to read the warrant fully before they took me in. At the bottom I saw that it has been signed by 'Big Daddy Jim Crockett'. The whole locker room fell over laughing, and I knew I'd been had."

Another time, coming into the Greensboro Coliseum, JC was stopped by a group of officers serving a warrant for him for assault and battery on a teenage boy. "The problem was," JC laughs, "It had never happened. The cops were the same ones who worked every match in Greensboro, and on the night in question they had escorted me in and out of the building and to and from the ring, and nobody saw this happen. So they told me to sign for it and get a

lawyer to investigate."

"I retained an attorney to check it out, and he got enough information, finally, for us to figure it out. On the way out of the building, this kid had run up and tried to kick me in the shin. I was carrying my bag in my right hand, so I put my left hand out, caught him in the shoulder, and said "Piss off, you little shit", whereupon the cops ran him off. He went home and told his father a big story, and his father had filed the warrant."

Incredibly, after the real story was discovered, and both JC's attorney and the police who had witnessed the incident told the D.A. what had happened, the case was STILL brought to trial. It cost JC another couple of thousand dollars to have his attorney

appear for him, try the "case", and get a not guilty verdict for something that had never taken place. The correspondence between JC and his lawyer also confirms this chapter.

It would be wonderful to say that all the Express legal troubles over the years were humorous, but unfortunately most were not. Still, despite a few harrowing moments and some stressful situations, the boys never paid any really sizeable judgments or attributable mostly to the fact that they really never did hit anyone who didn't attack them first. Legal fees, however, were another matter, as in this litigious society, even the innocent can be forced to spend a fortune to prove it.

MCNAIRY, CLIFFORD & CLENDENIN

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

300 COMMUNITY BANK BUILDING

127 NORTH CREEKE STREET

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27401

R. WALTON MCNAIRY
LOCKE T. CLIFFORD
HARRY H. CLENDENIN, III

TELEPHONE
910/376-1212

May 27, 1986

Mr. Jim Cornett
c/o Crockett Promotions
421 Briarbend Drive
Charlotte, North Carolina 28209

Re: State vs. Jim Cornett - Assault with Tennis Racquet

Dear Jim:

Unable to investigate this matter in any circumspect way, I took the bull by the horns and called directly to Roy Lee Landreth, father of the alleged 14-year old victim, Anthony Scott Landreth. He says that on the occasion alleged in the warrant, December 15, 1985, his son was by the Coliseum door when you came out with the Midnight Express. One of the wrestlers pushed the boy and, when he made some retaliatory movement, you hit him in the back with the tennis racquet; that when the boy got home that night he could not straighten up his back; that he was in so much pain he took his son to the Emergency Room; that there was a large knot on the boy's back; that the knot was confirmed by the doctor; that he is going back to see the doctor again before the court date; that they are mad as hell and, although they do not have a lawyer yet, they may indeed sue everybody in sight, including you, the wrestlers, the Coliseum and the Police Department. I am now trying to determine from a list of some 15 law officers who were at the Coliseum that night which, if any, saw the altercation and might be able to testify on our behalf. After I have made this determination, I will get back in touch with you in order to see whether you should waive your appearance and let me try the case in your absence, or whether you need to be present in court on July 2nd.

Enclosed is my statement.

Yours very truly,

Locke T. Clifford

LTC:afp

Dear Jim:

July 24, 1986

Congratulations! The D.A. would not dismiss the case so I waived your appearance, pled not guilty and tried it out. Judge Foster found you not guilty.

I think we have heard the last of this matter.

Yours very truly

Locke T. Clifford

LTC:afp

Who's Paid First??

Jim Crockett Under Oath!

DEPOSITION OF JAMES A. CROCKETT

The Discovery Deposition of James A. Crockett was taken on the 20th day of February 1989, beginning at approximately 11:30 a.m., at the office of Meyer, Darragh, Buckler, Bebenek & Eck, 1300 One Valley Square, Charleston, West Virginia, before Roberta E. Selby, Notary Public and stenograph court reporter.

This chapter provides you, the reader, with perhaps the rarest, most unusual pro wrestling souvenir of all--something even the biggest wrestling superstars have rarely, if ever, seen. A promoter, under oath, explaining how he pays the wrestlers. The following text is taken verbatim from a sworn deposition given under oath by Jim Crockett, Jr., during the Express' Beckley lawsuit. At the time of the deposition, Crockett had just sold his company to Turner, but during the period about which he is being questioned Jim Crockett Promotions was the second largest wrestling organization in the world.

Abbott and Costello would have been proud of this masterpiece of doublespeak and obfuscation. Sit back and enjoy that most unique of all occurrences--a wrestling promoter forced to tell the truth!

THE PLAYERS:

Asking questions (Q) is Mr. Rogers, the plaintiff's attorney.

Answering (A) is Jim Crockett.

Interrupting for clarification (!) is Mr. Byron, the Express' lawyer.

Q. And how were these people compensated?

A. They had a minimum or--a minimum. And then if the town did well, then they would get more.

Q. Did you also provide transportation expense for these people, too?

A. If they had to travel over 300 miles.

Q. The people under contract, specifically the Midnight Express, how was their compensation determined?

A. It's somewhat complicated. If you've got a pencil I'll try to show you unless somebody's got some objection, but it's, you know, it's basically the--The wrestler, we tried to pay the wrestlers 30 percent of the net house. Okay. That's what our talent pool was. What's, in the contracts would distort that.

Q. Well, when you say by the net house, explain what you mean by the net house.

A. After state and local taxes.

Q. Okay. What about rentals? Was that included?

A. No.

Q. State and local taxes was the only thing that you deducted from the purse?

A. The rule of thumb was that the talent, wrestling talent, was to receive 30 percent of the net gate receipts.

Q. "Net gate receipts" meaning--

A. Defining after state and local--

Q. Gross receipts, less local--

A. --Commission taxes.

Q. --and state taxes.

A- Yeah, you know if I--

Q. How was it divided out further to the performers on that night?

A. Those in the main event--let's see. What's the percentage that that breaks down to? About--without a calculator, I think it's about 65 to 70 percent of whatever that 30 percent amounted to that went to the main

event. The balance was divided by the underneath

card
Q. How many events would you normally have in one evening?

A. No more than two, normally one.

Q. Are you talking about main events?

A. Oh, main events?

Q. Yeah.

A. In the town of Beckley, probably only one main event.

Q. And in some towns, larger towns, you would have more than one main event?

A. Yes.

Q. And if you had more than one event, did the two main event people still take only 60/65 percent?

A. Yes.

Q. Then they would divide that 60/65 percent?

A. Right.

Q. Who determined how the monies were divided?

A. Basically I did.

Q. Was this included in their contract, or was this kind of a side understanding you had with the wrestlers?

A. I believe the contract states, "to be paid in the normal fashion and customary to wrestling", and then they had their minimum at the end of the year.

Q. And you, as president of the company, normally did the calculation as to who would receive what amount?

A. Yes.

Q. Were these people provided with copies of the gross receipts from each match that they--

A. No.

Q. --participated? Did you give them any type of computer printout or anything as to the amount or the way that their salaries were computed?

A. No.

Q. The main event as was in Beckley that night, you say they would have gotten 60 to 65 percent of the total gate receipts for--

A. No.

Q. --net gate receipts for that night?

A. No, that's not what I said. I said that the pool of money--

Q. I'm sorry.

A. ---for the talent. Okay.

Q. Let me rephrase it. I didn't mean that.

A. Okay.

Q. You're saying that the Midnight Express, that night being the only main event, would have gotten 60 to 65 percent--

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A. I believe that's correct

Q. --of the 30 percent net--

A. Right.

Q. --that was taken in that night

A. Right.

Q. So then the other wrestlers on the card would divide the other 70 percent

A. Basically--

Q. Now how was--

?!. Let me interrupt here just a minute. That was--

Q. No, no. I'm talking about the 70 percent of the 30 percent. That's right. I mean 35 percent.

?!. Let me just try to clear something up here. I think Isn't it true that the main event wrestlers would consist of two teams?

A. Or two individuals.

?!. Okay. But if the two teams, or two individuals, those persons jointly would divide or share 60 to 65 percent of the 30 percent net--

A. Yeah.

?!. --not just of the teams.

A. Yes.

?!. Okay. Well, you were talking about the Midnight Express taking 60 percent of the 30 percent. I think that's going to go between the two tag team matches.

Q. Why don't we talk about 16 percent of the net?

?!. Eighteen, nineteen and a half, how about that?

A. Sounds great when you're trying to sign them up when you get 65 percent. When you're talking about thirds, you're really talking 16 percent.

Q. I didn't mean to---I may have confused it. It's my understanding that normally the wrestlers who participate in a wrestling event would end up taking approximately 30 percent of the net gate receipts that were paid that night by the public.

A. Right.

Q. Out of that 30 percent, normally the main event people would take 60 to 65 percent, the main event participants.

A. Right.

Q. That normally would consist of two tag team matches--two tag teams or two individual wrestlers.

A. Or four individual wrestlers. Whatever is classified as the main event would share that.

Q. Then the remaining portion left over of the 30 percent, which would be 30 to 35 percent, that would then be distributed to the other wrestlers that are on the card.

A. Right.

Q. Now who would determine then as to what per-

centage of that the individual wrestlers would receive?

A. I did.

Testimony took a brief turn away from the subject of compensation, then returned--

Q. Did you have a particular formula that you always used in determining the amount of compensation these people were to receive?

A. Generally, I'd say yes.

Q. Explain to me, as you would get the receipts in, as was done in the Beckley match, what calculations would you have made to determine-- Considering the fact that the Rock & Roll Express and the Midnight Express were the feature card and I think further assuming that there were 6 matches on the card that night, what guidelines would you have used in determining the amount of compensation that would be received by the respective wrestlers?

A. That's a pretty good question. Basically, that you take 30 percent of the net take and I believe it's 65 percent of that number and divide it by 5, and that's what each individual would get. And the balance of the money would then be divided by the number of people on the card and--

Q. And how would that--Now what percentages would they get?

A. They get 35 percent of 30 percent, I think, basically, and then yet I believe that was a driving trip. I think there was a minimum of \$60 that we paid the other people to drive up here, so that the percentage-- and I don't remember what the house was--but let's say divided--There were 10 people on the card, and their 35 percent came to \$35. They'd have a minimum of \$60 so they could, you know, get up here.

Q. So do you all--when you would send wrestlers there, then you then gave them monies, reimbursed them--

A. No.

Q. --a certain amount to their driving expenses?

A. We just had a minimum that we paid talent, and that same minimum applied to Cherryville, North Carolina as it did to Beckley, West Virginia.

Q. And your minimum that they received---

A. I think during May of 1987, and I'd have to go back and check our records, but I think it was in the \$60 range for that. I mean it could of been---when I started in this business, there was no minimum, and people got \$5 or \$2.

Q. Now did you all do a lot of endorsements for the

Midnight Express, some type of endorsements?

A. What do you mean by endorsements?

Q. Well, in your contract it lists that you all have a right to receive monies for their endorsement, all kinds of--

A. No. The answer is no. That was part of the contract, and that's something that we never really got into.

Q. Explain to me about your taping, when you all would tape these shows in Atlanta. The wrestlers were to receive what, a minimum of \$40.

A. Right.

Q. Is that normally the total amount that they would receive for this taping?

A. I'd have to see what the minimums were, but that sounds about right for that time period.

Q. Those minimums--Those videos, were those done at live matches?

A. Yes.

Q. And for that particular time, they would not receive the customary 60 of the 30 percent, those participants, but they would only receive the minimums?

A. Yeah.

Q. And who received the monies for the gate receipts on those particular matches?

A. The ones in Atlanta?

Q. The ones that were taped.

A. Well, you said Atlanta. There are no revenues from the tapings in Atlanta.

Q. Oh, okay. Well, that's what I want to know.

A. Okay--if you taped in a---outside of Atlanta--Atlanta was always studio. So if we taped Columbus, Georgia, and there was revenues, then we got the revenues.

Q. Well, that's my question. Anytime that you all taped for purposes of showing or promoting the match on TV, then wrestlers were only paid the minimum?

A. No. If they wrestled only for TV, then they just got the minimum. If they wrestled in a main event to attract the crowds, then they got their normal pay.

Q. So when the wrestlers said they had to show up in Atlanta for taping, you're talking about strictly studio taping.

A. Yes.

And the testimony went off into other equally enlightening directions. These three grown men, graduates of major universities, actually had this conversation. But let's take Jim Crockett's formula and apply the math, just for chuckles and grins, to see how it works out. We know that the gate reported to the

wrestlers the night of the event by Sandy Scott, an honest man, was \$22,600. And we know the amount of taxes the Raleigh County Armory would have deducted (we know this because Jim Cornette ended up running this arena many times as a promoter of Smoky Mountain Wrestling in the 90's) was 6 percent. \$0--

Total gate-----\$22,600.00
State/local tax 6%-----\$ 1,356.00
Net gate-----\$ 21,244.00

30% of net gate---\$6,373.20 to the wrestlers
60% Of the 30%---\$3,823.92 to the main event

There were 5 participants in the main event: Bobby Eaton, Stan Lane, Jim Cornette, Ricky Morton, Robert Gibson. \$3,823.92 divided by 5 equals \$764.78.

By Jim Crockett's math, each of the main event participants were entitled to \$764.78 each for their night's work.

Lane, Eaton and Cornette received \$425.00 each.

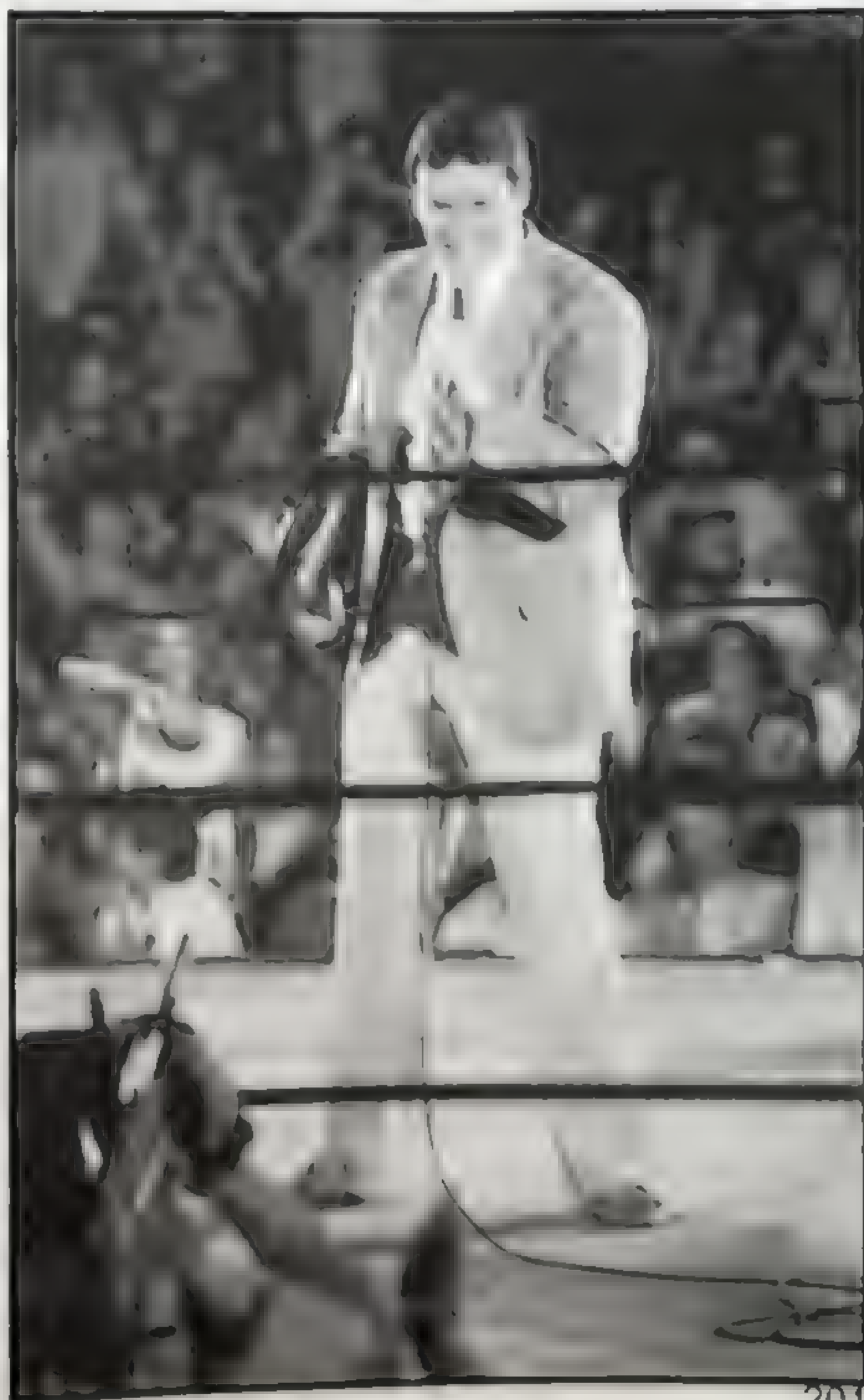
"Ladies and Gentlemen" **The Ring Intro**

Of the many things that set the Midnight Express apart from other teams, one of the most unique and distinctive was the custom of having Jim Cornette do their ring introduction. It all started with the Express' very first match.

"It was Bill Watts' idea", JC recalls, "that having the obnoxious, motor-mouthed manager come out and say that the regular ring announcer wasn't good enough, and only I could properly introduce such a great team, would set us apart and get a ton of heat, and he was right. We did it on our first TV appearance, and kept it up all through our stay in Mid-South Wrestling. At the arenas, where we had a little more time, I began prefacing the intro with a crack or two about the city or the fans. It developed from there to where it was a trademark of ours."

"The only place we ever worked where we didn't do the ring intro gimmick was in Dallas in World Class. Of course, there were a LOT of things we didn't do in World Class that we could've done. When we moved to Atlanta, we picked it right up as Dusty loved it, and actually expanded on it. As it evolved, I would do more

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and more verbose and hyperbolic intros of the team, and when Stan joined us, since he had such a great "radio DJ" voice he started introducing me. It was a trademark of ours that people really got into, and has been copied quite a bit in the last 20 years."

As the MX entered the ring to their familiar music, JC would snatch the mic from the announcer and set the tone with a sneering remark such as, "We knew we were in the city limits of (insert town) when we looked out and saw toilet paper hanging on the clotheslines to dry", or "Men, try to keep your fat ugly women in their seats, the Express are afraid of being molested".

"One of my favorites", JC relates, "was, I heard a tornado came through here last month and did over \$3 million worth of improvements! Then, when applicable, I might point out a big sports loss, a local political scandal, or anything embarrassing to that particular city."

Then, years before most wrestlers had what came to be called "catch-phrases", JC would launch into the intro, praising the MX with several descriptive phrases that are remembered to this day:

- Twin sons of different mothers,
- The human highlight film of professional wrestling,
- Every mother's nightmare and every schoolgirl's dream,
- The Merchants of Menace,
- The Gangster of Love and the Sultan of Swing,
- The men that every woman in the audience would push their husbands or boyfriends off the edge of a cliff to spend one night with, before finishing with either "Lovarboy Dennis and Beautiful Bobby", or "Beautiful Bobby and Sweet Stan, THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS!!!"

For Stan's intro of JC, he would take the mic and begin with, "He manages millions and trains champions, and he's" followed by a line tailored to current events or topical subjects.

"After the D.C. mayoral scandal", JC said, "where Marion Berry got caught smoking crack with a hooker, he introduced me as Marion Berry's favorite manager. When the Trumps split up, I was the man who stole Ivana away from the Donald. After Pee Wee Herman's arrest, I was the man who taught Pee Wee Herman everything he

knows. Other times, I was the man who ... Richard Simmons his first workout video. Whatever was topical."

It was always followed with, "he's your friend and mine, Mr. Jim Cornette!" Another bit of business was the pre-match high five routine. Right before the bell, as a final gesture of unity Dennis would high five Bobby with both hands. JC would do the same with Dennis, then JC would go to do it with Bobby. They would both freeze with their hands in the air, give a Fonzie-like "Aaaayy", and embrace each other in a big hug, with JC then planting a deliberately-pantomimed kiss on Bobby's cheek.

When the crowd roared, JC would turn to them with a "What? What's wrong?" expression and milk it for all it was worth. "With Stan", JC laughs, "We changed it up. He and Bobby high fived, I did the kiss spot with Bobby, and then held my arms out with a big smile for Stan to embrace me. Stan would stand there, hands on hips, head cocked to the side, with a leery expression on his face as if to say, "I'm not sure about this", then extend his hand for a manly shake. With a crestfallen look and disappointed body language, I'd shake, and we were ready to go with the fans booing the shit out of us before we'd touched a soul."

From the time the Express first entered the arena, until the time they returned to the locker room, everything they did was honed and refined from thousands of matches and countless hours of improvisation on the fly to get the maximum response from the crowd, whether it be 500 or 5,000. The ring introduction never failed to get them off on the right track.





They Do The Curly Shuffle

The spot show spots...

Like all the great touring vaudevillians, the Express and Cornette had their favorite "spot show spots"-- routines for the small town matches that would entertain the crowd and make the babyfaces look smarter, or in some cases make a match good without the faces screwing it up, while nobody was taking any real punishment.

"In the big shows we would, of course, be serious, but in the small towns, we could still tear the house down without anybody getting hurt," JC recalls. "With the thousands of matches we had and going 20 to 30 minutes every night, you needed a little break. Dennis used to say we could make them laugh, then make them mad because we made them quit laughing. On the reunion shows the past few years, these spots actually got over better than they did years ago, because it was like seeing a great situation comedy from your childhood, and remembering it when you saw it again."

Some of the most popular Express routines, explained by JC:

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THE ARM PUMP

Our all time favorite. Bobby stops the face and grabs his left arm, wrings and yanks on it, then takes it to Dennis/Stano while I distract the referee. D/S is standing on the apron with his back to the ring, and Bobby feeds the face's arm over his shoulder, where D/S grabs it and yanks it several times like he's trying to pull it off. The face's partner screams to the ref we're cheating, I deny it, and we get the fans into it.

They work the arm a little more, then we all do the exact same thing a second time. A little more denying, then we go for a third time (the third time is always the charm).

THIS time, the babyface puts BOBBY'S arm over D/S's shoulder, and since he isn't looking, D/S goes to town, yanking that thing up and down for all he's worth while Bobby sells and screams. I look around, see this, and run to tell D/S what he's doing but he's so engrossed he doesn't listen until he sees the guy whose arm he thinks he has a hold of standing on the floor waving at him and freezes.

D/S looks at me, I point behind him, he does the "slowly I turned" take to look over his shoulder, sees Bobby and drops the arm with an "Aw, shit", and everybody pops. Done right with a good crowd, this can have them going for almost 10 minutes start to finish.

CRAWL THRU

Starts with Dennis or Stan in a fingerlock test of strength with the face in center ring. The face's partner points the ref to me, and while I protest and keep the ref, he crawls on his hands and knees thru his partner's legs and punches D/S in the gut, then runs back to his corner. I go crazy, the ref asks the faces, they deny it, and the crowd backs them up. I huddle the Express, and make the "secret" motions instructing them "If they can do it, WE can too!", and then D/S goes back to the fingerlock in the middle.

THIS time, I get the referee, and Bobby starts crawling between D/S's legs. Meanwhile, the other face also starts crawling between his partner's legs, and when Bobby looks up, the bottom face pokes him in the eyes, and his head shoots up into D/S's nuts, and both heels fall down selling for as long as people are still laughing.

TENNESSEE TIPTOE

The classic version is that Bobby snatches a headlock on the face, and tags Dennis or Stan. Immediately, the face shoots Bobby off into the far ropes, and drops down. D/S, stepping in, sees Bobby coming at him and drops down too. Bobby jumps over both, but hits the near ropes and bounces off.

D/S, starting to get up, sees Bobby coming back the other way, and drops down again. So does the babyface. Bobby clears both again, hits the far ropes, and heads back. The face jumps out of the way, but D/S, having just stood up, gets mowed down by a charging Bobby and both heels fall all over the place until, once again, the fans quit laughing.

A variation is Bobby snatching a headlock, the face firing him off, and both men going into a criss-cross with the face, on the third trip across the ring, sliding out and chasing me. I go around one post and roll into the ring, see Bobby coming at me, drop down, Bobby jumps over me, and when I stand up I turn around and Bobby, coming off the other side, mows me down with a shoulder tackle. I lay there

motionless until the crowd dies down, then D/S comes over and helps me stagger to my feet, pulling my suit jacket tail over my head "accidentally" in the process.

Suddenly blinded, I panic and begin swinging my racket wildly at my apparent enemies, who are really the Express ducking out of the way of my wild and frantic swings.

REFEREE BOXING

Insulted at a perceived biased call from the ref, I get on the apron and call him over, chewing him out as I violently point my finger into his chest.

The ref takes it, then gives me the same back so forcefully that I roll off the apron to the floor, whip off my suit jacket, hop in the ring, and doing my best Fred Sanford shadow boxing, challenge him to a fight. "Just you and me, C'MONN!" The ref stands there puzzled, until finally getting mad, pulling his shirttail out, and jumping into his own boxing stance, slapping the mat and throwing jabs, and the fans are usually going crazy at this point.

He throws jabs at me until I fall backwards through the ropes, and while I recover my composure, the babyfaces raise his hands as if he'd won the fight. I get mad, and while yelling at them for doing it, I put my suit jacket on inside out, which everyone in the arena can see but me, and I ignore Stan's warnings until finally he comes over to me, whispers in my ear, I look at my jacket, register shock, whip it off and toss it on the ground and stomp on it.

THE BREAKUP

A sure fire way to get out heat back after losing a match, as we did quite often. After the babyfaces have left the ring, I begin stomping around, obviously perturbed, and then catch a glance at Bobby, standing there innocently.

If he dropped the fall, even better, but even if he didn't, I find a way to blame him. At first, it's just a slight pantomime of "What were you thinking?", but as I pace around and get more agitated, the crowd begins to realize I'm blaming him. Finally, however long it takes to get their attention, I'm finger pointing, yelling, and gesturing wildly and he's taking it.

D/S steps in to make peace, but I shove them back and slap Bobby in the face. He sells it, gets hot and snatches me by the tie and draws his fist back. Now the fans are screaming for him to hit me. D/S



Referee boxing with Nick Patrick

steps in to stop him and HE shoves them back. I start begging for my life as Bobby drags me around all sides of the ring by my tie, asking the fans with his fist cocked back if he should blast me, D/S begging him not to do it.

As the fans get louder, I drop to my knees, hug his leg, and beg him not to do it. At their loudest point, he starts to soften and listen to me, his body language starts to change, I open my arms for a great big conciliatory hug, he takes it, and as I kiss him on the cheek the crowd erupts into a frenzy of booing, and I grab both Express' hands and raise them in victory. We leave with the crowd booing the shit out of us and already having forgotten we lost the match.

The difference in these Three Stooges routines, and all the other comedy spots the Express did over the years, and today's choreographed wrestling, is that we never really planned them out, we just did a bit of business, and over hundreds of matches refined, added, or took away until we had these basic bits and how to change them up to play to individual crowds that were buying different things.

All we had to do was say the two word title of the routine to each other, and we were off and running. If our opponents didn't know it, we could work around them, and if the crowd wasn't buying, we could cut it off at any point and go on. We could make

them laugh, then go right to the heat and by the time the match was over, have someone ready to attack us. It was part of the performance art and improvisation that, among many things, is missing from today's wrestling product.

The Midnight Express was also known for innovations in serious tag team wrestling, such as perfecting the art of blind tags, a tag in which everyone in the arena except the opponents see it, complicated and multi-phase high spots that left the team bouncing around like superballs, and devastating doubleteam spots and finishing maneuvers.

Many of the tag team moves you see in matches today are either homages, updates, or out-right steals of MX moves, which I would dub with fancy names like the Flapjack, the Double Goozle, the Rocket Launcher, the Veg-O-Matic, the Divorce Court (it not only separates the shoulder, it divorces it), the Gravedigger, Ping-Pong, and on and on.

Brian Pillman once remarked that wrestling the Express was like wrestling a couple of air traffic controllers, because they were coming at you from all directions while shouting code words that only they understood, but if you just stayed where they told you to you'd never get hurt. It was all part of what made the Express matches stand out from any other team in wrestling.



But Seriously, Folks... *Cornette's Cracks & One-liners*

Jim Cornette's promos during the Midnight Express era were widely noted for being full of rapid-fire cracks, insults, and one-liners. A list of all of them would require a book unto itself, as well as the review of thousands of hours worth of video tape, as even JC himself can't remember all of them. But they served a dual purpose -- for those who believed in wrestling, they were absolutely infuriating, directed at the fans' babyface heroes and the fans themselves, but for those a little more "with the program", it was like getting a bonus comedy routine in with your wrestling.

"I was the funniest guy in wrestling when wrestling wasn't funny," JC recalls, "And it got over because it was different, and I was such a smartass. When everybody in wrestling started trying to be funny, I got serious, and made them believe I was a cranky prick. Regardless of what you do, you have to be different than everybody else, and regardless of what you say, you have to make people believe you mean it."

Here is but a short selection of JC's flavorful cracks, all actually delivered at one time or another on television.

Save your breath, Dangerously, you'll need it later to blow up your inflatable date.

If it was raining soup, Rick Steiner would be out in the yard with a fork.

Jimmy Garvin's wife, Precious? They put her picture in prison to cure sex offenders.

Nikita Koloff is so ugly he couldn't get a date on his tombstone.

Madonna and Sean Penn got a divorce - Sweet Stan Could be Madonna's next Sean
Joan Collins and Peter Holm got a divorce - Sweet Stan could be Joan Collins' next peter!

I wish Dusty would have a seat and take a load off the floor.

JJ Dillon's had so many face lifts, he's got nipples on his chin. They had enough skin left over to
make a midget. His social security number is 1.

Am Anderson was the proud winner of the Dom Deluise look-a-like contest.

The Express knocked Barry Windham colder than a banker's heart.

The Rock & Roll would rather give birth to a 27 pound flaming porcupine than fight us.

This town's hotel is so small, THEY stole MY towels.

I wouldn't believe Paul E. Dangerously if his tongue was notarized.

Jimmy Crockett is so cheap he gave me a dollar bill and Washington's eyes were bloodshot.

The judge won't allow Pee Wee Herman to defend himself, and Pee Wee is sure he can get himself
off.

Since Mark Lowrance (Dallas announcer) has been on the air, people have decided to quite breath-
ing it.

Wrestling 2 is so old, the doctor told him to start walking 2 miles a day. That was 6 weeks ago, and
now we don't know where the hell he is.

Sweet Stan's doing charity work. He started a halfway house for girls who won't go all the way.

We just got back from a pleasure trip. We took the Fantastics to the hospital.

When Bobby Fulton was born, the stork who delivered him was arrested for carrying dope.

Baby Doll is so fat she shops in the Junior Moose department.

Randy Mulkey looks like he went to give blood and forget to say when.

The people of Beckley are so stupid, it makes Mayberry look like a think tank.

Louisiana reminds me of Darwin's waiting room.

Sunshine - the football team retired HER jersey.

State Farm told Fritz Von Erich to find a new neighbor.

If you bowled the Steiners' brains at a drinking straw, it would look like two kernels of corn rolling into
a storm drain.

Eventually even a blind squirrel will find a nut

Hacksaw Duggan is so dirty he could lose weight by brushing his teeth

When Gordon Solie went to school, they didn't have history

That story would bring a tear to a glass eye

Just because Magnum TA's breath smells like Cheetah's ain't no sign he's Tarzan

Sunshine has been on more street corners than the Dallas Times Herald

JYD, when you go home tonight, give my regards to the warden.

Dr. Death stayed up all night studying for a urine test. Mind readers charge him half price

Big Bubba Rogers is the only man in the world that can strap a bucket of fried chicken on his back and ride a motor scooter across Ethiopia.

This punk couldn't draw money if you dipped him in glue and drug him through Fort Knox

Rick Steiner is so dumb it takes him an hour and a half to watch 60 Minutes.

And an all-time classic from 1998 -

Hulk Hogan is a household word, but so is garbage, and it stinks when it gets old too!

“Lotsa Ants” & Other Great Ribz



by **JIM CORNETTE**

The Midnight Express and I used to get a lot of strange looks from fans and wrestlers alike when we would burst into the locker room or pull up at the arena laughing until tears ran down our faces. Now, I don't mean to sell you a story that every night was roses and applesauce and we all skipped to work like schoolgirls with shiny new vibrators. There were a lot of long, hard trips, aggravating circumstances and various delays, cancellations, reroutings and breakdowns with a schedule like the one we kept for seven years.

Once, after our van broke down by the side of the road outside Baton Rouge, the three of us actually pulled up to the Centroplex Arena, bags, Mid South Tag Team Title belts and all, in the back of a chicken truck with feathers flying.

Everyone else had either blown past us, or recognized us and flipped us off on the way by. It was not a proud moment, but the guys who couldn't laugh, in the end, at either the situation or themselves, didn't fare too well in the business.

After a pissed off promo or tossing some bags across the room, we could still find a way to laugh about something. We were lucky that with both sets of the Express, we not only enjoyed traveling together, but each of us had our own style and personality when it came to ribs, jokes, or all-around road entertainment. It really kept us from cracking up.

Obviously, I leaned toward jokes, one liners, and cracks, as you would imagine from a hyperactive motor mouth. Each of the boys had their own specialty as well.

Bobby Eaton had a reputation for not speaking on interviews, and on the road he fit the Harpo Marx slot as well. He could make you laugh without saying a word. His style was simple yet classic rib, or the sight gag that came out of nowhere but worked instantly.

Bobby was known for carrying 2 or 3 huge duffle bags, almost body bags, to every show. These portable steamer trunks generally contained 6 or 7 different wrestling outfits, a few pairs of boots, a week's worth of street clothes, several large hotel towels, a sewing kit, first aid supplies, toiletries of every kind, and the stock of a small convenience store. Every night, there would be a line of guys in front of wherever Bobby had set up camp in the locker room, waiting in line to either borrow something, or ask for off-the-wall stuff just to see if he had it.

Bobby's bags also contained a plethora of rub-

ber dog turds, plastic vomit (just add milk), large fake spiders on a string, and a number of small household objects that squirted water in your face. He was a master at using them, and hilarity would ensue.

If you fell asleep in a car or on a plane, Bobby wouldn't just tie your shoelaces together. He would take them completely out, reverse them, put them back in where they started at the top, ended at the bottom, and THEN tie them together.

If you turned your back on your to-go cup of soft drink, he would take the straw out, tie a knot in the bottom, and replace it, so when you picked up the full cup and tried to take a big sip, the top of your head would cave in. Bobby also had a number of stock routines to freak out innocent bystanders.

Many times, riding in the back seat of a taxi cab, he would start moaning and holding his head, and rocking back and forth. This was my cue to ask, "Bobby, did you take your medicine today?" to no response. I would explain to the driver that Bobby had once been hit by a bread truck and still had headaches, and sometimes in traffic he would have flashbacks to the last thing he remembered, the sound of the truck's breaks squealing. "But he's OK", I'd continue, "as long as he takes his medicine."

Bobby would pick an opportune moment to stop moaning and rocking and scream "The brakes, the brakes!" and lunge for the driver's steering wheel while we restrained him, yelling "No, no!". The driver generally got us to our destination as quick as possible.

Often, at fast food drive-thrus, we'd be recognized and asked for autographs. Once, I took the girl's paper, signed it, and handed it to Stan. He signed it and passed it to Bobby in the back seat. Bobby scribbled on it, handed it to me, and as I passed it back to the fan I saw he had written "Please help me--call police!"

There were a number of instances where he absolutely refused to leave a convenience store until I started yelling at him for some imaginary offense, hit him with a working slap in front of the startled witnesses, grabbed him by the ear like a 5 year old and led him out to the car, where he sat on the bumper and pouted while I returned to make our purchases. One time, he carried it so far as to have me open the trunk, throw him in, lock it on top of him and drive off.

Dennis had a completely different comedy style, although he is famous in the Express inner circle for perpetrating one of the funniest ribs ever, a rare

"double reverse rib". It involved enlisting the aid of a co-conspirator to help rib an innocent third party, then ribbing the third party by pulling an even better rib on the unsuspecting accomplice. To protect the innocent, I can't go into details in print, but it involved shoving something completely unwanted into the partner-in-crime's mouth to the complete surprise of said accomplice and the utter mortification of the witness.

In South Texas, a short way from the Mexican border, we worked a small spot show in front of 100 migrant workers who spoke no English and didn't seem to have ever seen American pro wrestling. Not having El Santo with us to get a pop, Dennis took a hard gut shot from Bobby Fulton, ran to the locker room, and returned minutes later still trailing a long strip of toilet paper from his tights. Dennis' main humor, and the reason why to this day I consider him one of the funniest individuals in pro wrestling, is both hard to describe and unique to him.

He doesn't tell jokes, or do routines, or ACT funny, he just IS funny. To get the full entertainment value out of Dennis, you have to hear his voice, his descriptive phrases of speech, see his facial expressions and his body language. Dennis is a fountain of pearls of conventional wisdom, and hilarious when he is reacting to a stunning level of stupidity perpetrated by someone, relating with complete incredulity a bull-shit-laced story that someone has told him (with accompanying indignance that he was expected to believe it), or simply commenting on someone in the process of acting really weird and wondering what the hell they could be thinking.

His descriptive comments can slice an issue to the bone, i.e. "If the God Damn shoe fits, wear that son of a bitch!" He might get the short end of the stick in this article because you can't WRITE Dennis being funny, you have to SEE Dennis be funny, but take it from me, he slays me.

Stan, as befitting his "party guy" persona, is a million laughs when he's "on", which is most of the time. He does a lot of obscure references which are hilarious to us but go way over the particular audience's heads, as they stand there smiling blankly.

Once, at an autograph session, a fan presented him with a rookie year photo in which he was wearing a headband and tie-died T-shirt. Stan promptly signed "Helter Skelter, Stan "Tex" Watson", and followed up with 18 Manson Family references that had me blowing snot all over myself.

Stan was always ready with the simple, classic

rib as well, like the time on a crowded airplane when Curt Hennig was busy with both hands, stuffing a piano-case sized carry-on into the overhead bin and leaning way too close to the businessman in the aisle seat

Knowing Hennig didn't wear underwear, Stan waited for the moment when he was most defenseless, and snatched his pants straight to his ankles, freeing his penis to flop wildly in the man's face as the victim screamed "No, No!"

Even in those days, I was far from a comfortable flier, but on one long flight I was simply exhausted from our schedule and fell asleep reading People magazine. Stan snuck up and replaced my magazine, laying on the tray table, with the most gynecologically graphic porn mag ever printed, open to the centerfold, a lovely young lass with a cavern like the Lincoln tunnel.

Half the NWA crew was watching a steady stream of old women, straightlaced businessmen and disgusted housewives passing me on the way to the bathroom and looking at me like I had a steaming turd hanging out of my mouth, until the big pop came when an angry flight attendant woke me up and I came face to er, "face" with what was in front of me.

Stan's primary talent, however, was the "production number" rib, the one which combined pre-planning, a lengthy setup, planting seeds in the victim's mind, and enlisting trusted confederates of the victim to add to the rib's authenticity. Possibly the best of many of these was the "Lotsa Ants Caper".

We had wrestled an outdoor show at a ballpark in a small North Carolina town, and were driving back to Charlotte down a dark, two lane road in the middle of nowhere about midnight. We had stopped at a convenience store for our regular purchases, two or three soft drinks for me, snacks and pretzels for Stan and Miller beer for Bobby, but Stan had bought something I didn't know about.

Stan, knowing I'm bug phobic, says "I love the summer, but I hate all the bugs that come out." I wholeheartedly agree. He then begins making observations about us being out in the woods, warm weather, anything he can work the word "bugs" into.

Then, he slaps his leg and has me turn on the dome light, saying he thought he felt something on him. I laugh and tell him he's spooked himself. Several miles later, he tells me to turn on the light again, and looking down, there's a big, black ant on his white sock. He slaps it and stomps it, saying he

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KNEW he felt something, and I respond that I'm glad he got the damn thing, because I was starting to get itchy.

Minutes later, I feel something on MY leg, turn on the light, and ANOTHER ant is on my leg. I yell "Now I've got one on ME!" and slap it silly. As I'm wondering aloud what's going on with these ants, Stan "remembers" he saw a big ant hill in the dugout we used as a locker room at the show, with ants running around.

Eyes widening, I ask "Where was that?", and he replies "So and so corner", and I yell "That was where I dressed!" Turning on the light again, I see 5 or 6 big ants in my lap, scream "They're in OUR CLOTHES!!", and hit the brakes and come to a screeching halt by the roadside. As I jump out of the car, I feel several more ants on the back of my neck from the direction of the back seat where Bobby is sitting.

Here now is the scene on the side of the road--I am in front of the headlights like I'm on stage, with my pants down around my ankles, slapping my legs and head while hopping up and down like a maniac, while Stan is beside the car slapping his legs and yelling "They're all OVER us!" and Bobby is behind the car with a beer in each hand.

As I start to pull my shirt off, a car pulls in behind us and blue lights go on. Instantly, I realize we'll have to leave my ant-infested car on the side of the road and get a ride with this nice policeman, when I hear Stan say "Rib's over!"

As I stood there gobsmacked and bumfuzzled, with my pants STILL around my ankles, the cop stared at us like he didn't know where to start, and Stan went into damage control.

Holding up the plastic bag of realistic-looking "Lotsa Ants", he said "Just a little joke, Officer", and putting his arm around the bewildered cop, walked him back to his police car, shook his hand, apologized for taking him away from his important business and put him in his car, telling him to drive safely. Then we got the flock out of Dodge before the cop realized he wasn't just seeing things.

The better part of this book could be filled up with stories of how we acted like crazy people on the road, and I've left out some classics like the "Mabel" rib, the "Glass-Breaking Hammer", or the numerous, inventive ways we were able to make Bobby, owner of a notoriously weak stomach, puke at will, sometimes by just saying something. It's amazing how the

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*Jim and Kevin Sullivan
sharing a serious moment*

power of suggestion can convince someone that KFC gravy is an exact duplicate of baby shit. That just leaves material for a sequel.

These stories are just an example of how we were able to spend 3 or 4,000 miles a week in a car together, or 10 straight days on the road with each other, up to 330 days a year for seven years, with our sanity partly intact.

Christmas Poems

With time on his hands at the Christmas break of 1988, and the landscape of the business changing rapidly, JC wrote a Christmas poem to send out with his cards. That poem is reproduced here.

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS 1988

Twas the night before Christmas,
and Jim Crockett was broke
All the creditors were stirring,
they couldn't find the old bloke
The lawsuits were filed
by the attorneys with care,
but it was all for nothing--
the money just wasn't there!
The wrestlers' credit ratings
were dying or dead,
while visions of big contracts
danced in their heads!
And Dusty in Texas,
thinking that he was through,
was plotting to kill
the big Pay-Per-View,
when from the dressing room
there arose such a clatter,
they sent poor Johnny Weaver
to see what was the matter.
"We want our money",
said the Warriors with a growl,
"And we're gonna get it, '
through fair means or foul!"
"Better luck than we had",
said the Express with disgust,
"The only thing left
in his pocket is dust!"
Away to the box office
they all flew in a flash,
thinking that they could snatch
a big handful of cash,
but the gate had been killed
by a dozen no-shows,
when half the talent decided
to New York they should go!
When what to our tear-filled

eyes should appear,
but Jim Crockett himself,
smelling strongly of beer.
With plane tickets in hand
that were purchased so cheaply,
we knew in a moment
they were issued by Lindsey.
And he wheezed, and he belched,
and he called us by name--
"On Rotunda, on Steiner,
on Rogers and Fulton,
on Stinger, on Luger,
on Ivan and Sullivan!
Move on to Atlanta,
things will be better--
the travel's out of there,
didn't you get my letter?"
As dry leaves that before
the wild hurricane fly,
the Shepherders ran off
before he bled them dry.
But Crockett didn't care
how many followed their tracks,
Rhodes was in every angle,
he could pick up the slack! ,
And even though Flair
was World Heavyweight Champ,
he couldn't get a pin
over a kid in summer camp!
It seemed that the boys
would never get their due,
even though so many
had threatened to sue,
and contracts were settled
for way less than half,
up in Greenwich it seemed
Grinch Vince would have the last laugh,
when in came Ted Turner,
with money and power,
and rescued JC
at the very last hour!
Offices were closed,
incompetants fired,
power plays were won
and executives hired,

and of the departed,
 many of you know who,
 TBS people said
 "What the Hell did they do??"
 "We can find no reasons
 but nepotism and insanity
 for these folks to have jobs,
 that's what caused this calamity!"
 And then the revolution
 was finally completed,
 and the talent felt at last
 they would be fairly treated.
 Some problems remained
 to be smoothly worked out
 but the boys will get paid,
 at least of that there's no doubt.
 But what of Jim Crockett,
 you ask one more time,
 didn't he have to pay out
 his very last dime?

Only if you don't happen to count
 the millions in his personal
 Swiss bank account!

Then raising his finger,
 spilling Scotch from his glass,
 and telling us all
 to kiss his rosy red ass,
 he was heard to exclaim
 as he snuck out of sight,
 "Forty cents to all,
 and to all--FUCK YOU!!!"

Of course, by Christmas 1990, the landscape had
 changed quite a bit more, and JC had a lot more free
 time on his hands and felt the poem deserved a bit of
 updating, so this is what he sent out in his Holiday
 cards THAT year:

THE GRINCH THAT STOLE WRESTLING 1990

'Twas the night before Christmas,
 two years after the buy,
 and the state of pro wrestling
 would bring a tear to your eye.
 "We're changing the scripts",
 the New York Times quote had read,
 all the secrets were out,
 and pro wrestling was dead.
 All the grandiose visions
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of lights, glory and fame,
 of million-dollar pro wrestling
 achieving national acclaim,
 had been supplanted instead
 by what the corporate world had borne,
 a farce of pro wrestling,
 deserving only of scorn!
 oh, at first they had tried,
 they had tried very hard,
 but they hired a V.P.
 who had little regard,
 for the business to which
 so many others were committed,
 he knew not the first thing,
 but he would never admit it!
 When suddenly from the office
 there was such a big fight,
 they sent James E. Barnett
 to help out if he might.
 He returned with pale face,
 and a trembling hand,
 "Yet ANOTHER of our bookers
 has been promptly canned!"
 "We'll depend on the champ",
 the few faithful did think,
 "Ric Flair has saved many
 from a sea of red ink!"
 Away to Charlotte
 they went with anticipation,
 knowing Flair could light fires
 under the whole wrestling nation.
 But the brains in Atlanta
 had closed the mine of gold,
 "Who wants to see Flair?
 He's 10 years too old!" ,
 Then what strange sight
 did our shocked eyes meet,
 but Jim Herd himself,
 his face red as a beet.
 With contracts in hand
 given out to unknowns,
 we knew in a moment
 all our hope had just flown.
 And he ranted, and raged,
 and he called out these names--
 "On Funk, on Steamboat,
 on Warriors and Flair!
 On Midnight, on Cornette,
 get the Hell out of there!"
 "You must step aside

for these faces are new
 we'll draw 20 million
 with this musclehead stew!"
 "The Clash ratings proved,
 believe you me,
 we can sell this green talent
 if the show is for free!"
 As rain clouds dry up
 in the hot desert sky,
 the attendances dwindled.
 ratings began to die
 TBS didn't sit still,
 no, they planned their attack,
 "No blood, no violence,
 that'll get these crowds back!"
 And even though Watts
 was a phone call away,
 they couldn't have that--
 why, he'd get in the way!
 Because, after all,
 as part of his deal,
 he'd want the fans to think
 wrestling matches are real!
 So into their skulls
 another notion did fly,
 "We'll make sillier shows
 that all the kids will buy!"
 Hence action the fans
 continued to crave,
 up North it seemed Vince
 had dug a similar grave,
 when that cranky old Herd
 found a foolproof new plan--
 He hired Moldy Ole,
 wrestling's grumpy old man!
 Morale dropped lower,
 old cronies were brought in,
 even with an old hand
 it seemed no one could win.
 Whatever knack had been had,
 way back when,
 by Ole for booking
 had left him by then.
 The best to be done
 by that sarcastic old rat,
 was a heel who pulled rabbits
 out of his Scorpion hat.
 "Anybody want a draw?",
 Chip Burnham's trademark line,
 was reduced to "here's 20"

and a pitiful whine
 The ship sank slowly
 with all hands on board,
 while Nero Herd fiddled
 and Petrik looked bored
 The potential of this venture
 slipped away like sand,
 Butchered by "businessmen"
 who couldn't find their ass with both hands
 And then the murder
 was finished at last,
 of this business which boomed
 in the not-distant past
 Every fan knew the words
 "Kayfabe, mark" and more,
 a few blamed the sheets
 but promoters told millions more.
 "But what of Jim Herd?"
 you ask with a shout,
 couldn't Petrik or Turner
 force the old Grinch on out?
 Sad to say, the world
 of corporate affairs,
 seems to guarantee
 that he'll always be there.
 So raising his fist,
 cursing under his breath,
 and condemning Dave Meltzer
 to a horrible death,
 he was heard to exclaim
 as he flew to St. Louie.
 "I shoulda stuck with pizza!
 Wrestling? AW, PHOOOEY!"



Fan Mail

From

Some Flounders

Believe it or not, JC and the Express generated a lot of fan mail. Well, it was mail from fans, just not from fans of the Express.

During the Crockett years especially", JC explains, "We got a lot of mail. The babyfaces generally got quite a bit, and the Rock & Roll Express got bags full. The heels usually got a few pieces of hate mail per week, but we evidently struck a chord with people, because they had to write us just to vent their anger. Every Wednesday we did TV promos at the Charlotte office, and there would be a bundle of mail, but at the TBS studios every Saturday morning, there would be a box full addressed to us."

"I always read it, because there were quite often classics of unintentional humor. During our feud with the Rock & Roll, we got thousands of letters from teenage girls using language you wouldn't think they'd even know. One said, 'When I turn 18 in 3 years, I'm going to find you and kill you!' Several were death threats written in crayon. Others were more serious, like unsigned death threats with no signature put together like ransom notes, or postcards from people who were legitimately damning us to hellfire for eternity. Those made you nervous. One adult woman wrote, 'I used to think my uncle so and so was the lowest man who ever lived, but you've got him beat.' It went on and on."

"Sometimes, we got mail from intelligent, well-spoken folks who would praise us as they were 'with the program', or even work with us by writing something witty in a 'gimmick' of their own. I saved a lot of them, good and bad, because it just showed that we made enough of an impression on people to write us something entertaining, whether they meant to or not."

This section contains reproductions of a few of the more interesting pieces of mail sent to the Express over the years.

DEAR MR. CORNETT

I THINK YOUR TEAM THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS STINKS. THE ROCK AND ROLL EXPRESS CAN BEAT YOUR ASS ANY DAY. THE ROCK AND ROLL'S ASS WILL MAKE YOU A SUNDAY FACE. YOUR MOUTH RUNS LIKE A CLAPPER IN A STUCK ASS.

YOUR MOM IS CROOKED THAT'S THE WAY SHE GOT HER MONEY. WE LIKED THE WAY THE ROCK AND ROLL KICKED YOU OVER THE TOP ROPE.

YOUR TEAM HAS TO CHEAT TO WIN THE BELTS. WE WATCHED IT.

IF YOU CLEANED THE SCABS OFF YOUR ASS YOU WOULDN'T BE SO GOOD ANYMORE. HAVE A NICE DAY.

A FAN

Dear Jim,

FUCK YOU! FUCK YOUR 2
QUEER butt buddies you call wrestlers
too. You are the biggest asshole.
When you open your mouth, shit
flies out!

YOU HAVE NO FANS! NO ONE CAN
STOMACH YOU OR BLOW JOB BOBBY OR LICK DICK
DENNIS.

Why don't you get out of wrestling & go
back to where you came from.

Go back to the stables with all your mothers'
stinky ass smelling horses & continue making
porno flicks sucking horse dick while your
mother fucks them & then roll around in the
horse cum.

You make me sick!! You're nothing but an
UGLY, FAT-ASS with a big
stretched out mouth from sucking
horse dick. And big Blubbery belly!

TAKE YOUR 2 queer butt fucking
buddies with you... you asshole!
Here's a little ~~something~~ picked fresh for you!!
EAT IT! YOU FOUR-EYED FAGGIT!!

This letter was, indeed, accompanied by a genuine booger placed inside the circle.

gaim

you are about the lowest
excuse for a man there
is. I always thought my
Uncle Dan was the lowest
man that could ever have
been born, but after what
you did to Don Harris
you've got my Uncle beat
by a country mile. You
a real slime ball & you
don't deserve to be a
part of such a fine sport
as Wrestling. You should
be in the Cooney Tooney
house.



Telegram

0YA021(1357)(A-0081055197)PD 07/15/84 1356

ICS IPMBNGZ CSP

A056280023 TDRN TONKAWA OK 24 07-15 0156P EST

PMS JIM CORNETT,, DLR

MYRAID CONVENTION CENTER

OKLAHOMA CITY OK

JIM

TAKE YOUR CAN OF ETHER TO NEW YORK AT MADISON SQUARE GARDENS ON THE
23RD. YOUR HONORARY MEMBER IS FIGHTING FOR CINDY LAUPER.

A MIDSOUTH FAN

This fan remembered the MX's Mid-South Wrestling association with Wendi Richter when she
became involved with Cyndi Lauper during the WWF's "Rock n' Wrestling" era

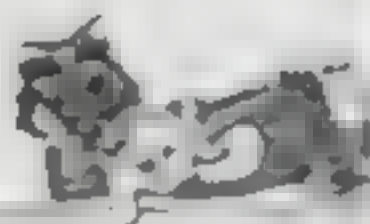
Jim -

Here's that copy of the
THURSDAY SHOW you wanted.
Sounded Great! Let's
DO IT AGAIN Soon!

THANKS,

John Boy & Billy

P.S. - THE STUFF IS ON SIDES
ONE AND TWO OF THE
CASSETTE.



Opposite page:

A dissenting opinion (top left)

An angry 12 year old (top right)

Do you kiss your mother with that
mouth? (bottom left)

R&R fan artwork (bottom right)

This page:

JC was a frequent guest on the John
Boy and Billy show in Charlotte
before their national syndication net-
work began (top left)

Some of their listeners appreciated
JC's humor (top right)

This fan from Louisville didn't get the
memo that JC had turned
babyface (bottom right)



★ Wrestling Program ★

THE BEST OF TEXAS WRESTLING INC



PAUL BOESCH Promoter & President
PETER BIRKHOLZ Asst Promoter & Vice President

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1984

HOUSTON, TEXAS

PHONE 659-7791

MID SOUTH TAG TITLES -vs- \$25,000!!!
16 FEET ABOVE THE RING ON A SCAFFOLD!!!
ROCK-N-ROLL EXPRESS -vs- MIDNIGHT EXPRESS!!!



THE ROCK-N-ROLL EXPRESS

Tonight's final event will not take place in the middle of the ring like the rest of the bouts on tonight's card. Instead it will take place 16 feet above the ring on a scaffold. The Mid South Tag Team Titles will be on the line against \$25,000 of Jim Cornette's mother's money. A Scaffold Match has got to be one of the most dangerous types of matches ever conceived. The Rock-N-Roll Express has demanded this match with the Midnight Express to once and for all settle their bloody feud. The Midnight Express' manager Jim Cornette offered the Rock-N-Roll Express \$25,000 for a shot at the Tag Team Titles with any stipulation the Rock-N-Roll could think of. The result is the scaffold. Cornette and his boys once attacked Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson on TV a few weeks ago while Ricky was demonstrating a straight jacket on Robert. The wild melee ended up with Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson both sprawled out unconscious in the middle of the ring. The Rock-N-Roll vow revenge and they plan on getting that and more here tonight!



THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS MANAGED BY JIM CORNETTE

When Jim Cornette first heard of the stipulation placed on the match he was at first in shock, then rage! "I can't believe that Mid South would allow something like this to take place. My men are wrestlers, not sign painters! How in the world am I supposed to coach my men when they will be 16 feet up in the air? You have got to be crazy if you think for one second that I am going to climb that scaffold and get up there 16 feet above the ring! I promise you one thing, Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson, you will pay for everything that you have done to us in past tonight when my men, Bobby and Dennis, take both of you and chunk you right off the top of that thing. And when you come shaking, rattling and rolling down, I'll be waiting on you with a little surprise of my own!" screamed an irate Jim Cornette. It always seems that Jim Cornette has been the deciding factor in all of the match-ups. This time with the match taking place 16 feet above the ring, it will be up to the Midnight Express to handle their own affairs.

HOUSTON WRESTLING RETURNS TO COLISEUM-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7!!
TICKETS ON SALE NOW INSIDE FRONT LOBBY!! BUY YOUR TICKETS EARLY!!
ANOTHER BLOCKBUSTING CARD BEING SIGNED!! WATCH TV FOR DETAILS!!

The "Street People" are after Jim Cornette

JIMMY VALIANT and MISS ATLANTA LIVELY

VS

THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS



She came out of nowhere. She came to the rescue of the leader of the street people, Jimmy Valiant. She arrived with more suspense and mystery than any person in the history of wrestling. She also arrived at the expense of Beautiful Bobby's jaw. Her name is really not known, but Valiant knows who she is. "She is a street lady," he says. "She is 'Miss Atlanta Lively.' She is one of the millions and millions of my people who were just sick and tired of that wide load, momma's boy Jimmy Cornette and his Midnight Express."

It's true. Many people, street people or not, had gotten tired of the Midnight Express. They jumped Valiant and Rocky King on every chance they got. They succeeded in getting King sent to the hospital, but when they tried the same on Valiant, Miss Atlanta Lively stepped in. Her right hand was solid up against the jaw of Beautiful Bobby, and the effects were great on the mind of the great intimidator himself, Jim Cornette.

"I have never been a part of a person so disgusting and so low in all my life," says Cornette. "Her perfume is that stuff that probably costs \$10.00 a

gallon, and she is a revolting person. She had to have a foreign object, because Bobby never goes down like that to a punch from anyone. Much less a sleaze bag like her."

As a result of her knockout punch, Valiant began a search. A search to find 'Miss Atlanta Lively,' and to get her to help him in the ring. He checked every location he could and talked to all of his street brothers. Finally he found her, and she agreed to help him out. She was signed to be a part of Starrcade '85 and to team with Valiant against the Midnight Express. The match will be a Atlanta Street Fight. Everyone knows that is Valiant's type of match. It is a match in which anything goes, and you, basically, throw the rule book out of the window. Plus, to help contain Cornette, and to help put a stop to all his antics, Big Mama will be at ringside. "Can you believe it?" asks Valiant. "Little Jimmy Cornette will not only have to worry about me and Miss Atlanta Lively knocking out his boys, he will also have to worry about Big Mama following him around."

The "Street People" combination is one that excites not only all wrestling fans, but also Valiant himself. "She got that right, Mercy! You see, mebee for the first time in they life, the Midnight

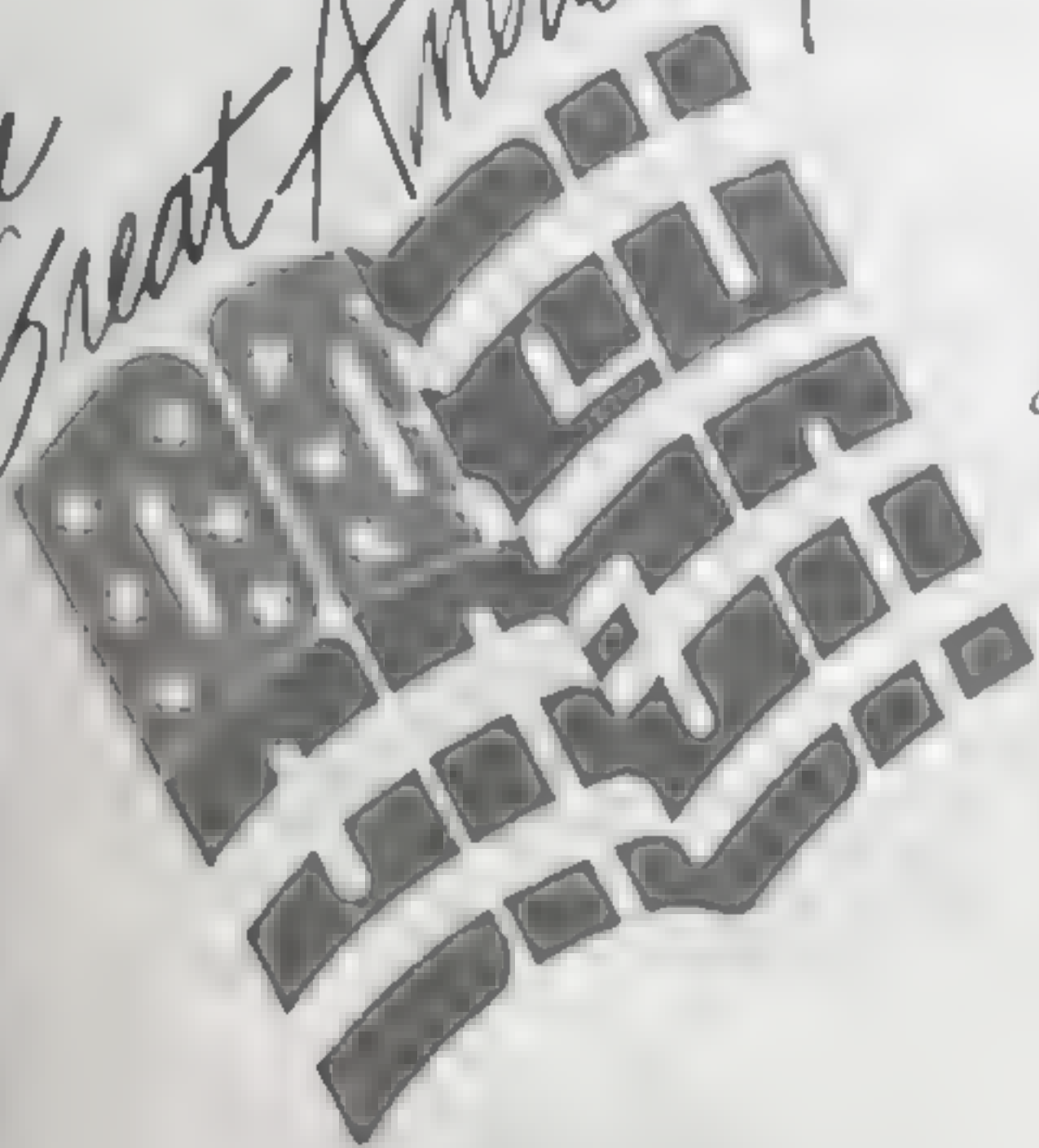


Express and ole wide load are scared. Yeah, they are afraid of what Miss Atlanta Lively might do," says Valiant. "She knocked out ole Beautiful Bobby on two different times, and she is ready to do the same to every member of the Express. I'm talking about Bobby, Dennis, Cornette and even Cornette's mother if she should appear."

The result of all of this is an irate Jim Cornette. "I have said it before, and I will say it again," says Cornette. "The street people are trash. They have done too many things to me and my great Midnight Express. We are prepared to rid the world of an eyesore. We are prepared to get rid of Valiant, Miss Atlanta Lively and Big Mama. And I might just get angry enough to slap them around myself."

It is an angry and upset Jim Cornette that just may lead to the downfall of the Midnight Express.

The Great American



Living in the Promise Land



Dear Wrestling Fan:

On behalf of Jim Crockett Promotions; welcome to the "Great American Bash '86". We are very proud and happy you have decided to spend part of your summer with us. You will be seeing what we feel is the very best in wrestling and music. The end result will be a night and a month we are sure you will never forget.

The month of July celebrates our nation's birthday and to help out in the celebration Jim Crockett Promotions has planned this great line-up of family entertainment.

So we hope you will enjoy the "Great American Bash '86". It is our way of saying thank you to you, our great fans. After all, you are the ones who make our country great.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Crockett Jr.".

Jim Crockett, Jr.,
President,
Jim Crockett Promotions, Inc.

Brand New For 2009

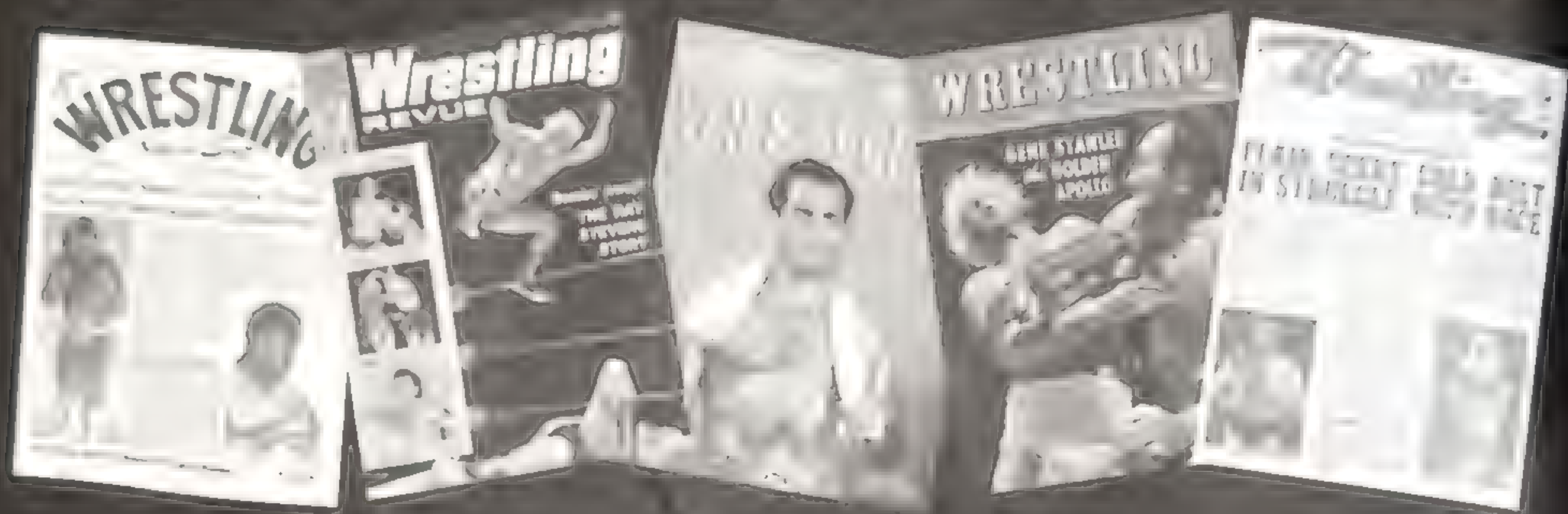
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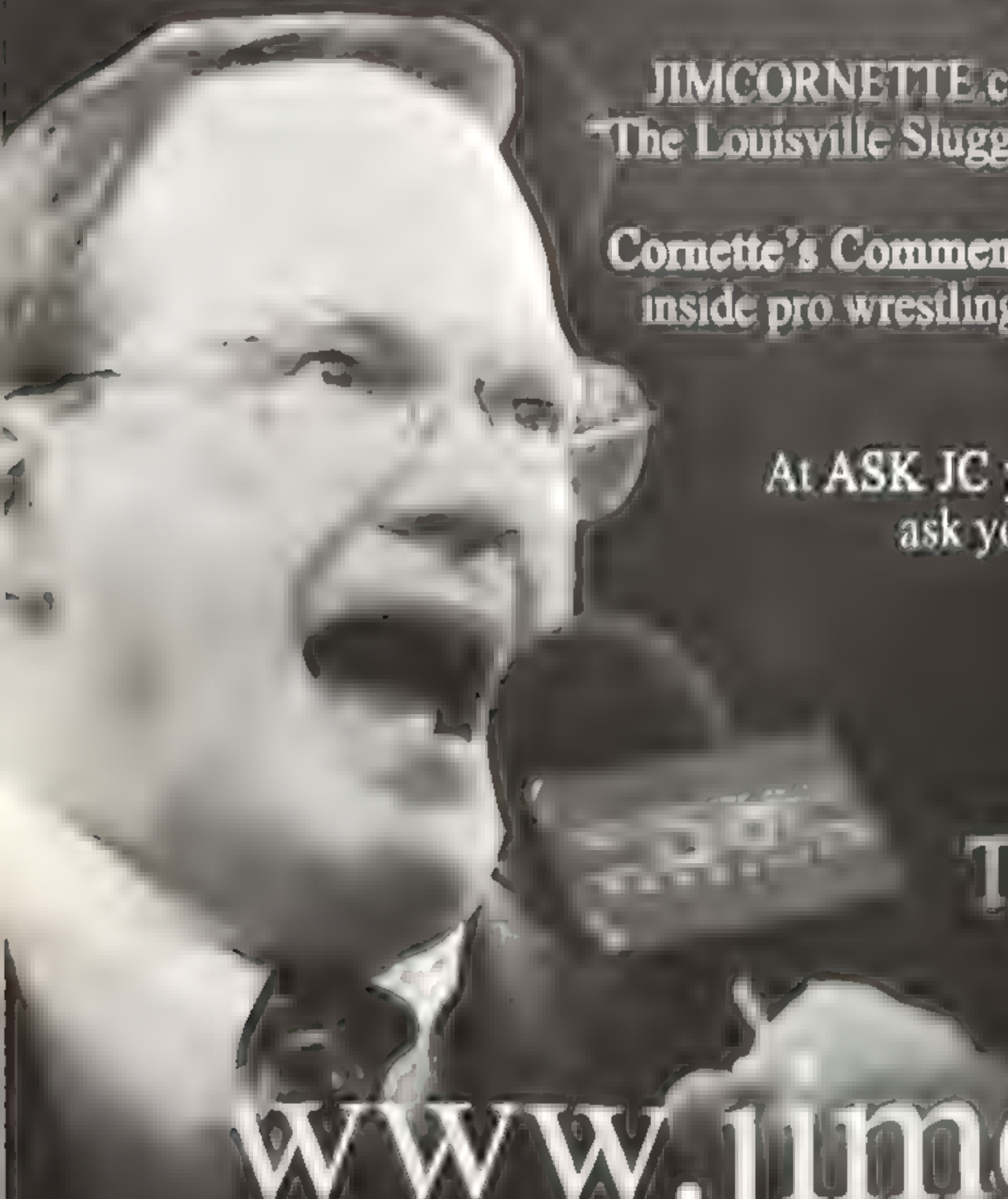
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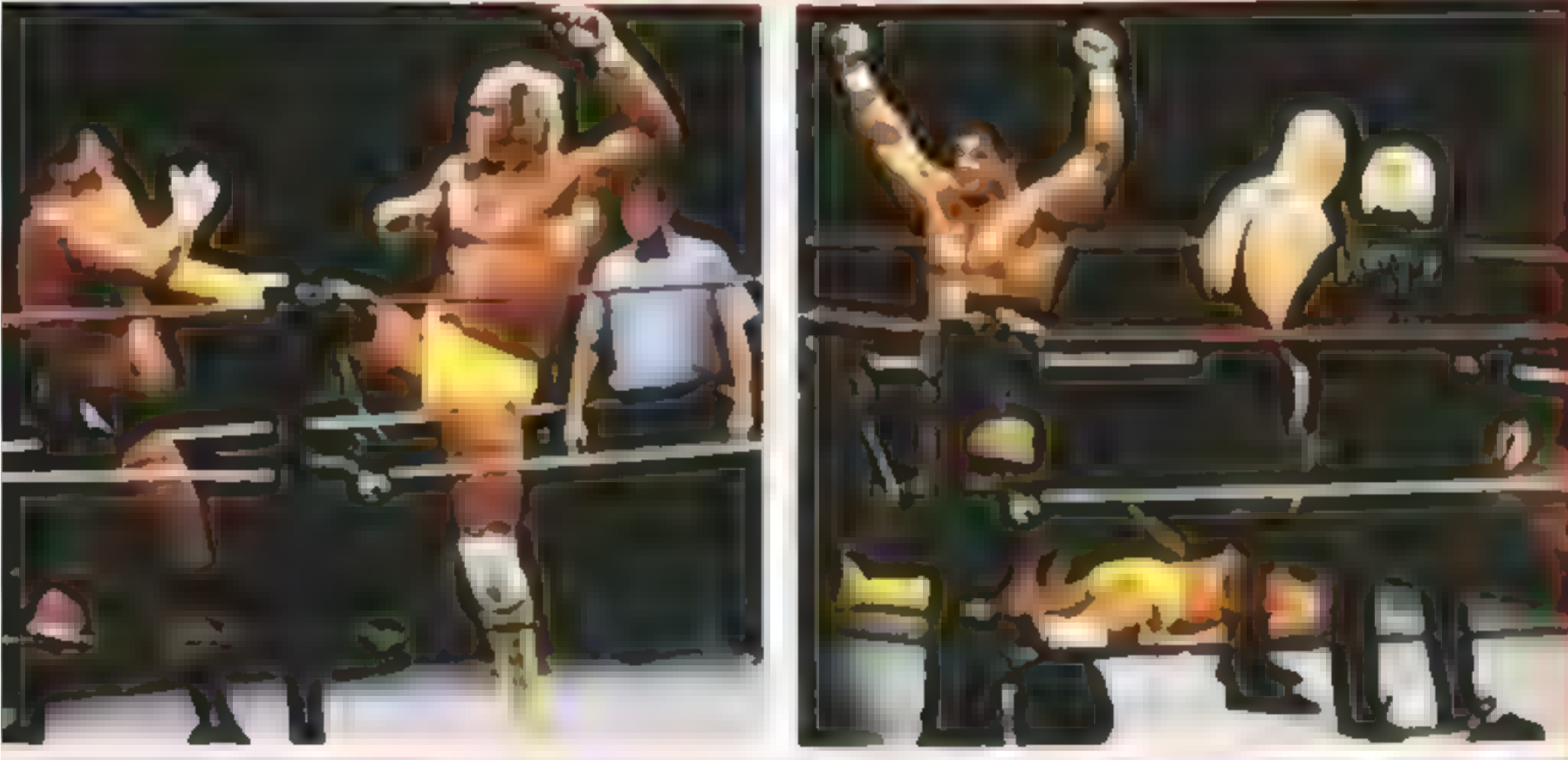




Wrestling

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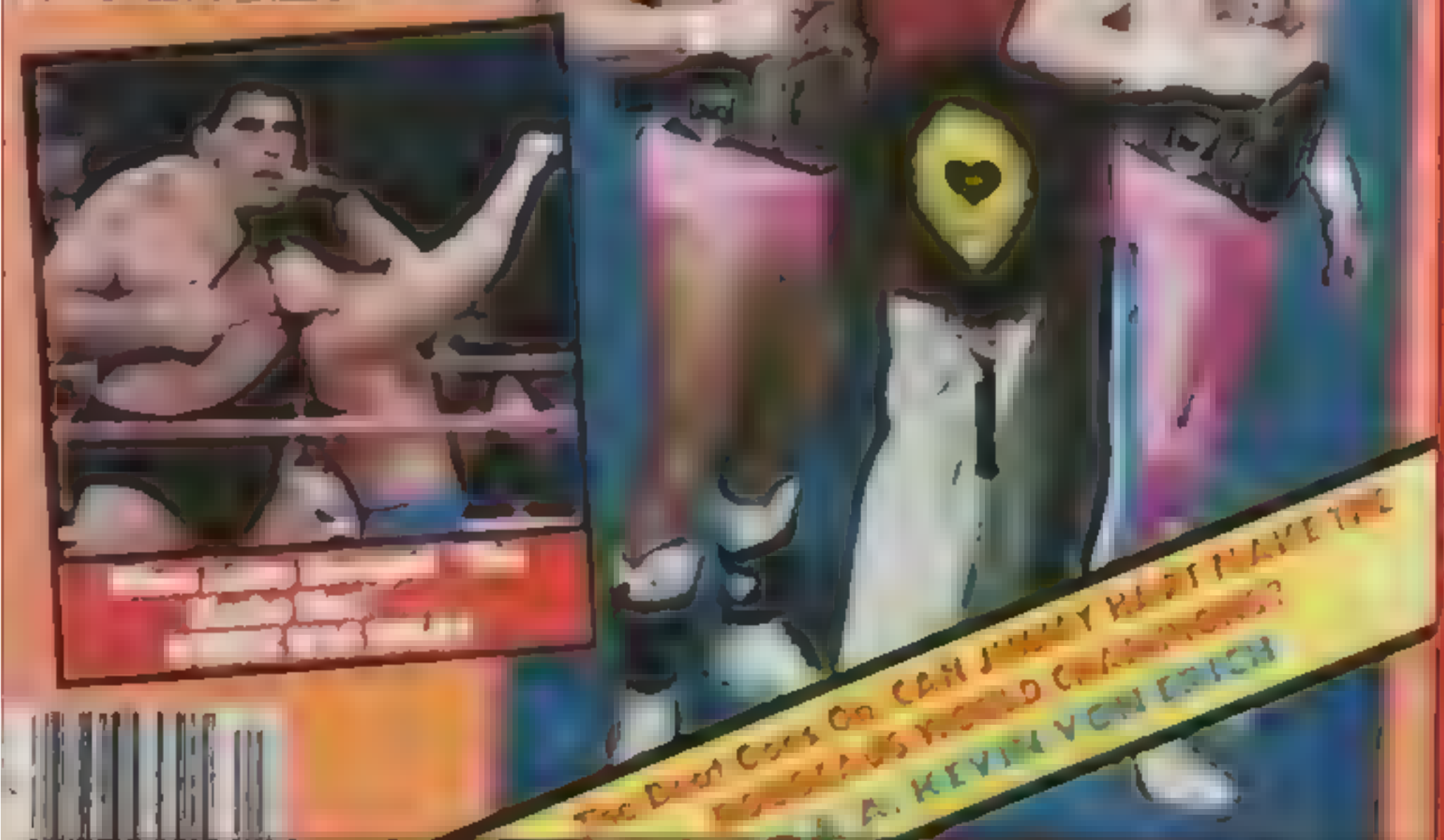


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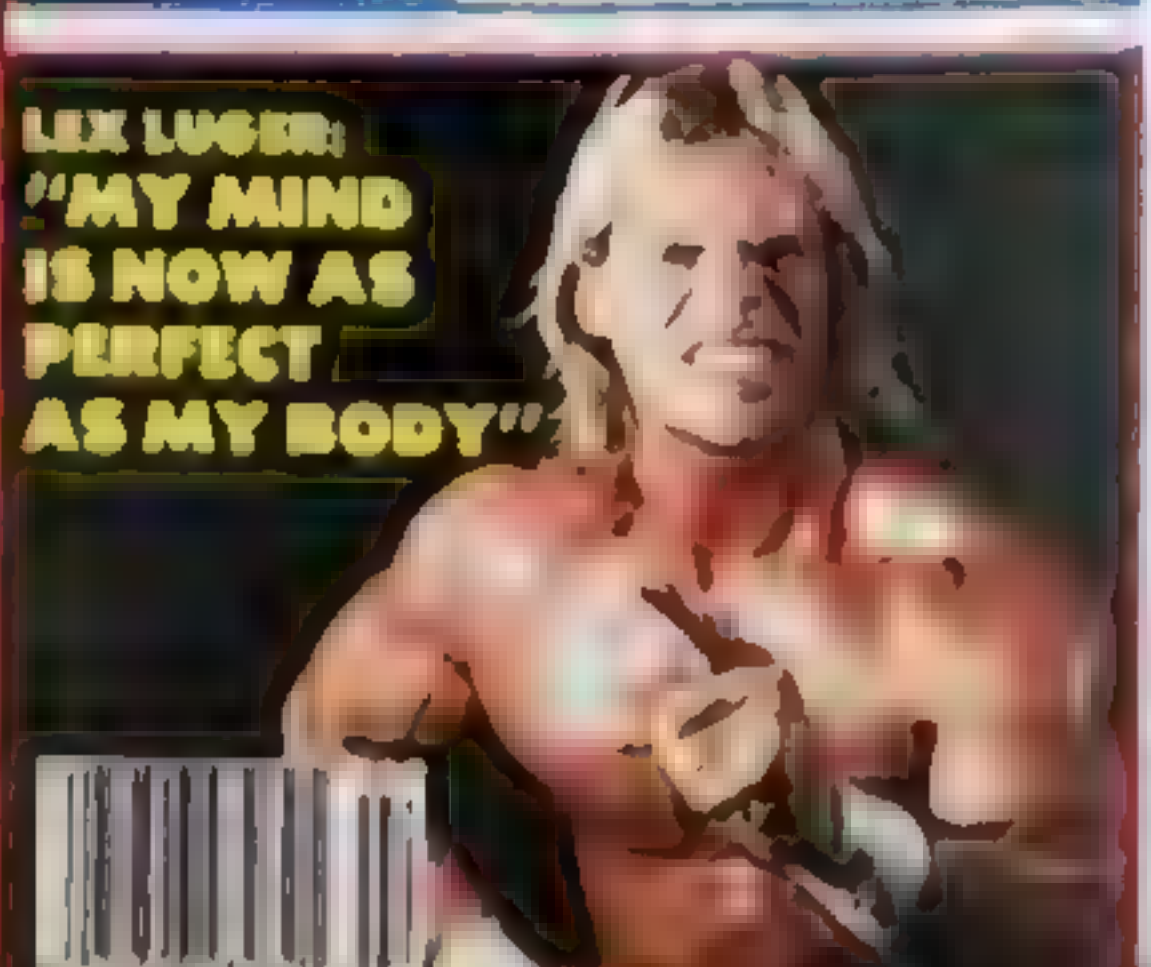
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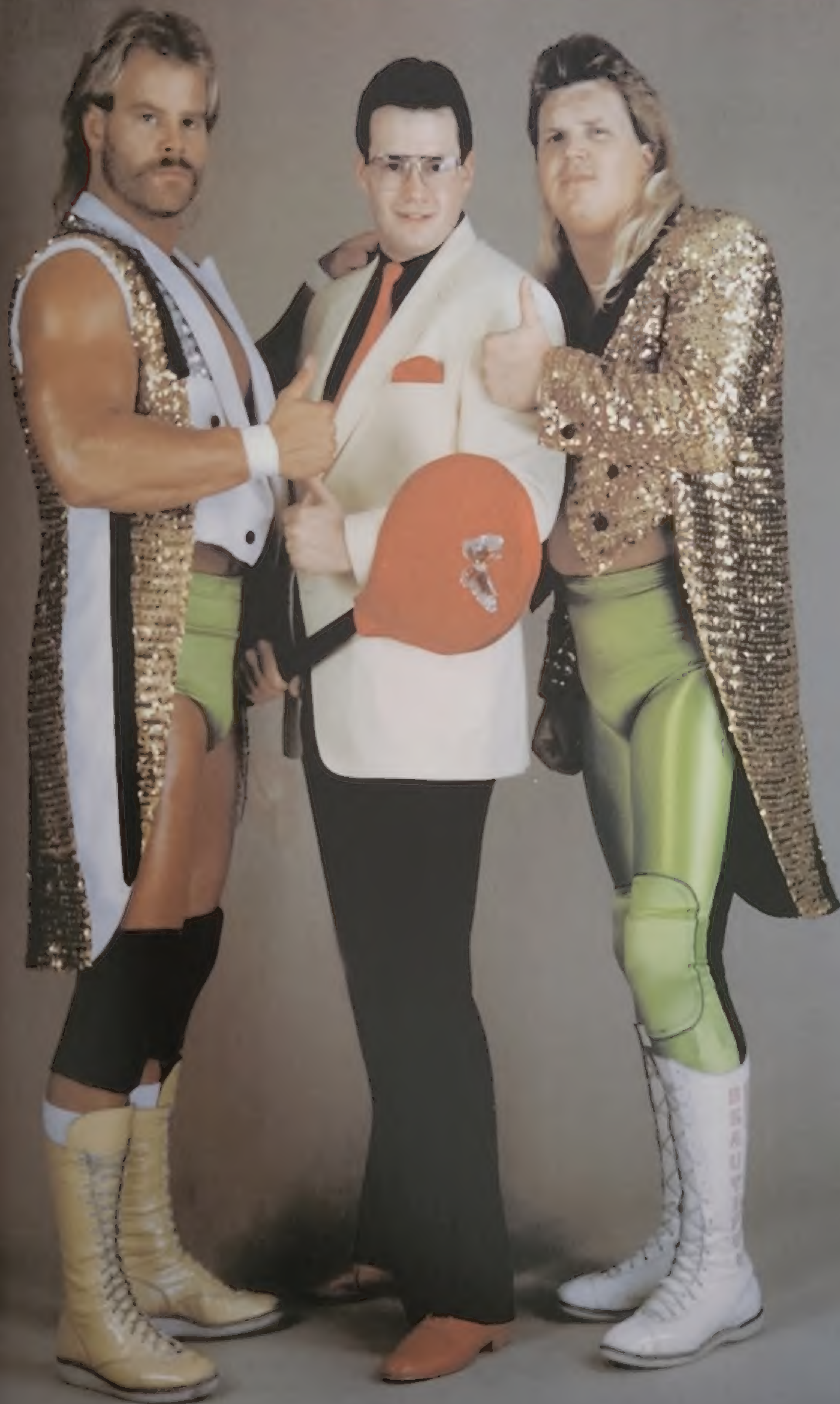
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THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS



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